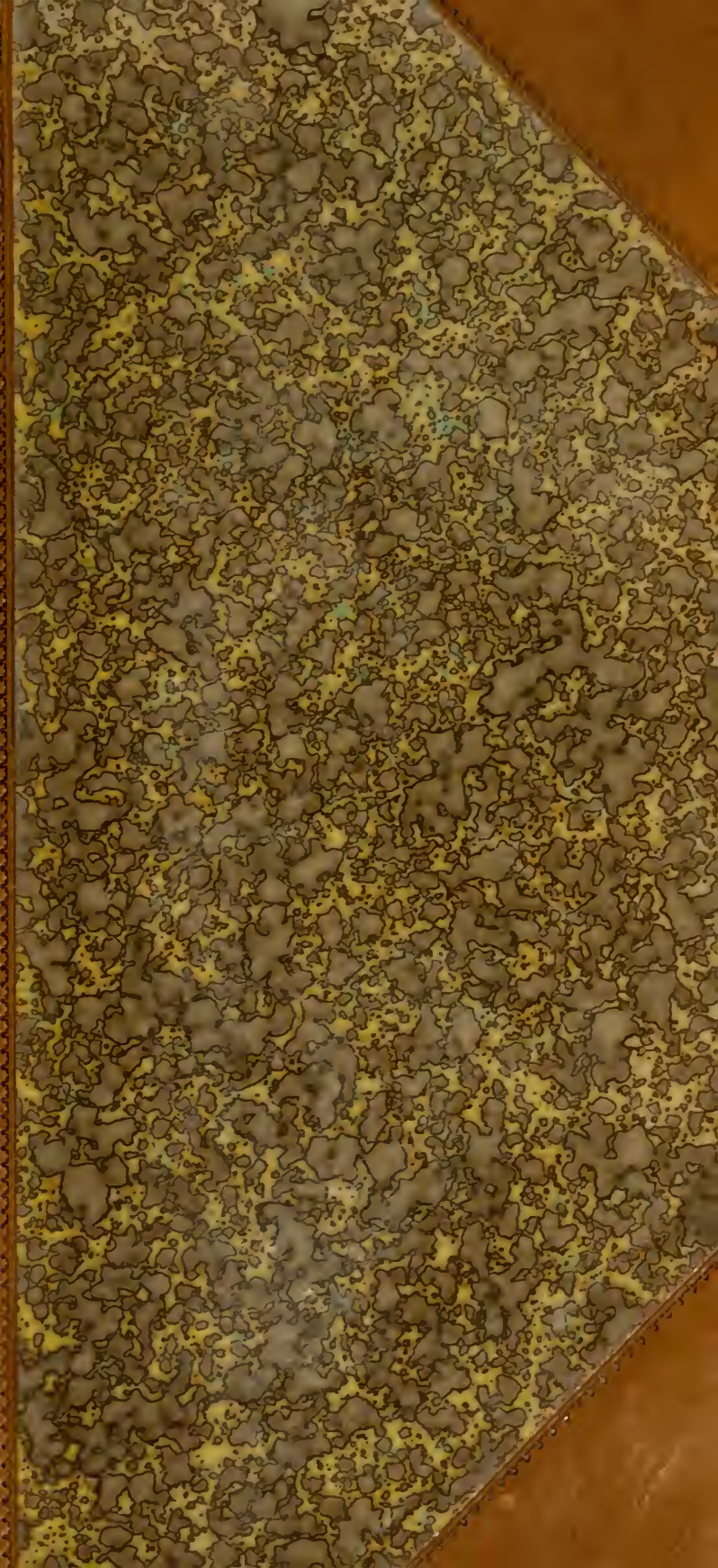



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K I N G ' S · C O P E .

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“MR. WARRENNE,” “MARGARET CAPEL.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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KING'S COPE.

CHAPTER I.

The voice so sweet, the words so fair,
As some soft chime had stroked the air :
And though the sound were parted thence,
Still left an echo in the sense.

But that a mind so rapt, so high,
So swift, so pure, should yet apply
Itself to us, and come so nigh
Earth's grossness ; there's the how, and why.

BEN JONSON.

THE nearest place of any importance to King's Cope was Sherwood, the dower-house of Lady Orrington, now a widow. She had formerly spent two or three months now and then in Lancashire, but since the death of the marquis, she had resided there altogether.

There was a very old family acquaintance between the Sherwoods and the Scawens; and Mr. Scawen was truly glad to secure her ladyship's presence on the occasion of his daughter's introduction. He would rather have put it off for a year than have wanted the countenance of so distinguished a neighbour. Lady Orrington, in common with the rest of her friends, was not so young as she had been. It was a long time since she had ridden the chestnut horse that Hugh had so much admired. She was a stout, broadly-made woman, with a large plain face, full of sense and integrity. She had brought up her family admirably. She rather bullied her sons, if that common term might be applied to a lady of her exalted rank—but with so much talent and firmness that they always respected her, and even minded her in all essential things. You never saw a Sherwood in the newspaper except on an appointment, or a list of fashionable guests. Lord Orrington's name was fore-

most in every charity in his county; and if common report did not altogether spare his character in other particulars, it was because he persisting in remaining single,—an inexplicable offence in a marquis.

Lady Orrington was by no means rich for her station; and she had taught her sons a lesson that report says is rare in the upper classes; to do without everything they could not honestly pay for. And you may be sure she inculcated this maxim in pretty plain terms—there was no fear of her gilding anything—they understood her well enough; for, excellent as she was, a more homely woman you never saw.

She was a Scotchwoman—and she generally called Lord Orrington, “Mote”—that being the name of his principal seat—her other sons she designated as Bill, Jack, and Bob. Lord Robert, the son now staying with her, was her counterpart in face and figure; short and square, with wiry hair, and a brown face

lighted up by a pair of hazel eyes, set very badly, but of unusual brilliancy. Lord William had a regiment—Lord John commanded a man-of-war—Lord Robert was expected to become a politician—his brother was to bring him into Parliament at the next election. He was very intelligent; with an eager manner of speaking, and a devourer of books in half a-dozen languages.

Lady Orrington always said that Bob would come to something, but at present she looked upon him as a child. Lady Lucy, the only unmarried daughter, was not popularly called a beauty. People could not understand her very singular and quiet loveliness. She was delicately fair, but her complexion from ill-health was of that yellowish tinge that may be observed in an antique marble bust. Her eyes were of the lightest hazel—her hair of the palest gold. In form she was like a statue—no one ever saw hands and arms more exquisitely perfect than hers. Her voice both

in speaking and singing was marvellously sweet. There was a delicacy, a softness, in her dress that harmonised well with the gentleness of her tones and manners. All her sister's children were passionately fond of her; looking on her as an angel of goodness and kindness. They would cluster round her like bees, and listen to her singing (which was, indeed, delicious), half in wonder, half in rapture, as if it came from the clouds. The little presents that she brought them were always prettier and more treasured than those of any one else.

Men now and then called her a nice girl, but generally passed her quite over. No word or gesture of hers was ever intended for admiration, or aimed to attract. So perfectly simple, so delicately soft, they never gave her a thought, and right and left, married any romping girl that asked them. Lady Lucy never asked them; and they left her alone.

This would have been very well, or rather

best, but that Lady Orrington, a remarkably sensible woman in every other respect, shared to the utmost the prejudice common in society against unmarried women. To say that she despised them would be to use a feeble term : the contemptuous pity with which she regarded them, and which she extended to her own daughter, must certainly have been rather hard to bear.

She could never be made to comprehend that they were capable of entertaining an idea upon any topic, however foreign to the domestic cares which naturally belong in a peculiar degree to married women. If the subject were paying a turnpike, or planting a cabbage, or choosing a shawl, she would say, " My dear Lucy, you know a single woman like you cannot possibly understand the best way to," &c. Now, though Undine received a soul as a wedding present, there are a great many married women who do not at all appear to have shared in the gift.

Lady Lucy's tranquil temper bore this petty annoyance as very few could have borne it. Perhaps she did not know that she had a very fine mind ; but nothing else could have enabled her to remain unruffled under this most contemptible and irritating trial. Lady Orrington would consult her daughter, Lady Harriet Lynn, upon little trifles that one would have thought a child could have decided, but which she imagined quite beyond Lucy's powers of mind ; and Lady Harriet knew about one fifteenth part as much as Lucy on every given subject, except the teething of children.

"We may as well go to King's Cope ; you have no engagements, Bob. Lucy, my dear, write and say so," remarked Lady Orrington, when she received Mrs. Scawen's invitation.

"I shall like to see Anne again," said Lady Lucy, as she sealed her note ; "she was such a pretty child."

"Take care *you* don't think her pretty,"

said Lady Orrington to her son ; you can't afford any nonsensical fancies of that sort, remember."

"John used to admire her very much," said Lucy.

"Jack ! a great baby !" exclaimed Lady Orrington ; "he was ready to admire every girl with a pair of red cheeks. Henry Scawen is a gentlemanly young man, and a very good match."

"That last remark was for your private ear, Lucy," said her brother.

Lady Lucy smiled faintly.

"We have both our cue," said Lord Robert, laughing ; "you to admire, and I not to admire : mine is the easiest, the cheapest receipt in the world to make a philosopher. *Nil admirari.*"

"I said nothing about Lucy," interposed Lady Orrington ; "I merely mentioned Henry Scawen as an excellent match ; I was not referring to Lucy, though if he took a liking to

her, it would be a capital thing. King's Cope would be worth stooping to pick up."

"I don't quite catch the precise meaning of that phrase," said Lord Robert; "something in the way of 'She stoops to conquer,' I suppose, eh Lucy?"

"I never stoop," said Lady Lucy, quietly.

"A long farewell then to King's Cope," said Lord Robert; there are so many applicants in these days for every good estate, that unless you bestir yourself, you see all your friends stepping over your head, and the vacancies filled up before you know where you are."

"Another quiet smile from Lady Lucy.

"It certainly is an awkward position in which we place our women of the nineteenth century," said Lord Robert; "I should think the life of a galley-slave was nothing to it; making the agreeable all day and every day, there's no harder work. I certainly pity women."

"So do I," said Lady Lucy.

"Poor Lucy has not the energy of Harriet or Adelaide," said Lady Orrington, kindly, as if she was palliating her offence of celibacy ; "but then, poor thing, she is far from strong."

"True ; and the strength of the stoutest porter would give way under a long course of fascination," said Lord Robert ; "Lucy is not equal to it, madam ; we shall see Fanny Legerton queening it at King's Cope."

"It is a woman's duty to marry," said Lady Orrington ; "a single woman has no vocation ; it is very easy, Bob, to make the subject ridiculous ; but I ask you what becomes of an old maid ? "

"That is the worst of being a Protestant," said Lord Robert ; "if Lucy now would but take a few lessons of Father Ignacio, the Knowles's confessor, she might be put in the way of a vocation."

"Good gracious, Bob, how very improper ! " exclaimed Lady Orrington ; "you should not

talk so, even in jest :—a Catholic ! though I believe we must not call them Catholics any longer. People have found out that *we* are the Catholics—they are to be called Romanists.”

“ People are very clever,” said Lord Robert ; “ I always used to be taught that words were arbitrary sounds. If the word Catholic has always been employed to designate a certain class of Christians, I can’t see why we should not go on to use it. For my part, if I had always heard them called Affghans or Iroquois, I should think it very pedantic and improper to refine upon the name, or to use any other term. It makes me sick to hear Englishmen termed Anglicans ; and I should certainly feel myself affronted if any one were to inform me that I was a member of the Catholic Church.”

“ Well, I don’t know,” said Lady Orrington ; “ however, Lucy, my dear, you had better order yourself a new dress.”

"If you think so, mamma," said Lady Lucy, calmly.

"A saffron robe, my dear Lucy," said Lord Robert, leaning back and taking up his book again.

They had neither of them any idea that she felt pained by this kind of conversation, she showed so little emotion of any sort.

Anne Scawen would have stamped her foot, and declared she had rather die upon the rack, than debase herself by an interested marriage : and Lady Lucy thought perhaps nearly the same thing ; but some people get a habit of remaining silent when they are quite sure they will not be understood.

Lord Robert was very fond of her, and no brother could be more obliging ; he would walk or ride with her whenever she pleased, and would spare no trouble to procure for her anything she might express a wish to have. But as to his comprehending a single one of her feelings, she knew that was not

to be expected. It was the same with Lady Orrington; she was indulgent and affectionate, and rather grieved than angry that her daughter had arrived at the age of twenty-one without a single offer; but she could no more read Lucy's heart than she could read the stars, or the Hebrew character, and there was no way of getting it translated to her: her daughter, gentle and reserved, shrank from exposing her feelings, for she had been brought up with the impression that feelings and weaknesses were synonymous.

"You must tell me which is Miss Scawen, Lucy," said her brother, as they entered the drawing-room at King's Cope; "I am so blind I can't see across the room."

"The girl in white crape. Oh! Robert, was there ever anything so beautiful?"

"My dear, I distinguish a white object, which may be anything from a pillow-case to a window-curtain: I dare say it is very beau-

tiful: you know best." Anne was standing beside her father, beautifully dressed, and looking superbly handsome.

She was hardly tall; but the perfectly rounded outline of her fine figure, and the lofty carriage of her classic head, gave every one the impression that she was above the middle height. Her complexion was dazzling; her teeth cast a streak of light when she smiled; her glorious eyes, fully opened, dark, and proud, had a spark in them like an opal; her lips were firm and scornful, and scarlet as the hawthorn berry. She was quite peculiar in her gestures. Instead of the horrible little jerk with which young ladies welcome their acquaintance, she bowed, like an actress or a Greek woman—deeply to Lady Orrington, very slightly to Bob, and to Lady Lucy not at all; but, stepping hastily forward, took her hand, and said, warmly, how delighted she was to meet her again.

There was one family already in the draw-

ing-room—the Legertons; and these persons not suiting her taste in any way, she had received them with a frigid distance of bearing, that, of course impressed them very unfavourably with her disposition. Mrs. Scawen assumed a martyred air on this occasion; and whenever her eye rested on Anne she tried to convince the company, by the deplorable expression of her face, that she found it a very hard task to live with her at all. But as Anne never once glanced towards her step-mother, she was not aware of these flattering imputations. She was eagerly conversing with Lady Lucy, recalling every little incident of their youthful parties at Sherwood.

“Don’t you remember, Lucy, the day when you and I got into the boat by ourselves, and were drifted into the middle of the lake?”

“Yes—and the agony poor Mdlle. Dalmont was in—how she was obliged to go to John, her bitterest enemy,—do you recollect?—and

how John stood shouting on the bank, telling you to 'back water,' a proceeding you had never heard of before."

"Oh! I wonder how we ever got across. I was frightened that once, I allow."

"But you were so brave. John always held you up as a pattern to me. Do you know, since Mdlle. Dalmont left me she is married?"

"No: to whom?"

"Some old *rentier*—they live at Dieppe."

"And Miss Elder has left me."

"Well, I suppose you are not sorry for that?"

"Oh! yes; she was a real friend to me."

"While Madlle. Dalmont, like most French women, I suspect, was a real friend only to herself. She used to try to make an impression on William. Oh! you don't remember William, or you would see the absurdity!"

“ No ; I don't think I ever saw Lord William.”

“ Do you recollect, Anne, how we used to domineer over Robert ? ”

“ Oh ! yes ; how we made him carry the dove-cage all the way to the summer-house on the other side of the lake.”

“ And how we sent him for cherries that hot day ? ”

“ Oh ! we behaved very badly, Lucy.”

“ He was older than you, too ; I don't know how we managed — I had the advantage of him by a year.”

“ You see we were two to one,” said Anne, laughing.

“ Now tell me about that nice boy, Hugh,” said Lady Lucy.”

“ Oh ! Hugh is grown up now—he is twenty.”

“ Oh ! true—Robert's age. When do you expect him home ? ”

“ Next year — he was to have returned

this summer; but he was appointed acting Lieutenant to a ship on the West India station, and that has delayed his return. I hear from him frequently—we mean to live together when he comes back—he has sent so many plants home for the hot-houses at Datchley; in fact, he is—”

Anne paused, because, as to explaining what Hugh was, that was quite out of the question.

“Just what William is to me,” said Lady Lucy, very calmly.

“Oh, Lucy! have you a brother, too, whom you love better than anything in the world? How we shall understand each other!”

“I hope so,” said Lady Lucy, smiling.

“I wonder whether we are waiting for any one?” said Anne.

As she was speaking, the butler threw open the door, and proclaimed, with a loud voice,

“General Clavering and Mr. Clavering.”

Anne started as if the butler had fired a pistol into the room, and could only reply to Lady Lucy's calm look of interrogation—" Oh, my goodness !"

Mr. Scawen, after advancing to receive his guests, presented them to Anne. General Clavering was a well-bred little man; he expressed his delight at the introduction, looked as if he admired her exceedingly, and then gave place to his son.

Mr. Clavering was not in the slightest particular altered since the day when he left King's Cope; he first nodded to Anne, as if he had seen her that morning at breakfast, then came up and shook hands. Dinner was announced immediately, and he offered her his arm as a matter of course.

He seemed to have grown even more taciturn than he used to be; the soup was removed before he uttered a word; and then turning to Anne, and looking at her steadily, he pronounced the monosyllable, " Well !"

“ Is that all, Mr. Clavering ? ” said Anne, archly.

“ How about Hugh ? ” he asked.

“ Oh ! I don’t mean to tell you ; we always quarrelled on that subject, you know,” said Anne.

“ Do you think I am altered ? ” he asked.

“ No, not a bit, you don’t look a day older.”

“ You are, though, he observed—you are taller, and handsomer, and prouder, if that can be.”

Anne had never before perceived the shrewdness which formed part of his odd character. She looked surprised and haughty. He did not speak again during dinner ; she turned and conversed with Lord Robert, who sat on her other side. She had time to observe that her brother Henry was making the agreeable to his neighbour, Lady Lucy. She was too quiet to show any pleasure at his attentions : but Anne knew that people called him hand-

some, and there was nothing in his easy gentlemanly manners that would indicate the entire worthlessness of his heart. How she would like Lucy for a sister ! she thought—but not that way. She wondered whether Hugh would be too young.

When the ladies moved from the table, Mrs. Scawen managed to whisper to Anne,—“ You will try to behave like a gentlewoman, and not attach yourself to one person, as you did before dinner.”

Therefore leaving Lady Lucy a prey to the Miss Raleighs, she sat down among the Legerton girls, and tried to talk to them.

They were very good-looking,—with showy figures, and fine heads of hair : but they did not attempt to join in the society, or contribute anything towards the conversation ; but lay, rather than sat, on chairs and couches in indolent attitudes, that plainly announced their indifference and discontent. One of them had, earlier in the evening, tried to attract

Lord Robert, for she would have liked his title; and as she had a good fortune, I dare say he would have married her, only his thoughts being very much occupied by his future career, he did not mean to settle for many years to come. Anne could not get on with these girls.

Nothing seemed to interest them. At last, seeing that they were very handsomely dressed, she began to talk to them about the fashions—but even that subject failed; they bought fine clothes, but they had no ideas about them.

Lord Robert used to say that if a woman talked sense, he was happy to converse with her; if she talked nonsense, he could get on as well as most people; but after that he could go no farther—he was not great in monologue.

Now, these girls could not even talk nonsense. But they played the harp, and did a great deal of worsted-work.

The arrival of the gentlemen was a great relief to some of the women. The Legertons became less languid.

Lord Robert and Mr. Clavering came up to the table where Anne was sitting. Lady Lucy joined them, and began to turn over the books and prints that were scattered about. There was a French edition of "Gil Blas," then a novelty, with Tony Johannot's masterly illustrations.

"How well this is illustrated—it's capital, this book. Have you read it? — it's so natural," said Lord Robert, his eyes darting sparks, as usual, when he spoke.

"Is it natural?" said Anne. "I've read it, but it depicts a kind of life of which I have no experience; it does not amuse me. But I like the pictures, as the children say. Hugh draws rough groups in that manner; he sent me over some not long ago."

"On my word, the French beat us in wood-engraving!" said Lord Robert. "They

do, I'm afraid, in every branch of decorative art."

"Perhaps," said Anne, "they give more encouragement to genius in France."

"But encouragement is of no use," said Lord Robert. "You can't force men of genius like Providence pines. They are an accident — a disease. However, you can force ingenuity to any size you like it to grow."

"Oh! my lord, — genius a disease!" exclaimed Anne.

"That's his pet notion," said Lady Lucy.

"I maintain it," said Lord Robert, eagerly; "nothing but a disorder of the brain; an irregular pulse. A healthy mind never created Othello, or invented the theory of colours."

"Invented!" said Mr. Clavering; "you might as well say Columbus invented the New World."

"So he did," said Lord Robert. "A discovery is an invention — a supposition, that the after-proof confirms."

Lord Robert, being very young, was rather fond of these quibbles, which he indulged in, partly to surprise people, partly for argument's sake. Mr. Clavering had no notion of arguing, but he was not easily mystified.

“ Ah ! very fine ! ” he said.

“ Is it true ? ” returned Lord Robert ; “ because then you may depend it 's fine. There is nothing finer than truth.”

“ I hope that 's not a disease ! ” said Anne, laughing.

“ No ; it would be a good thing if it were,” replied Lord Robert.

“ An epidemic ! ” said Anne.

“ The Palace of Truth — how nice ! ” said Mr. Clavering. Then, fixing his eyes on Mrs. Scawen's turban, he muttered : “ We know some people who are disagreeable enough when they lie ; but if they took a fancy to speak the truth the house would not hold them ! ”

“And what a blessing that would be!” said Lord Robert.

“So it would!” said Mr. Clavering, quite struck.

Henry now came up, with his smooth courteous manner, to ask Lady Lucy to sing.

“I wish you would sing German,” said Lord Robert. “I am tired of those Italian warblings, that lead to nothing.”

“I can’t; don’t *you*?” said Lady Lucy, turning to Anne.

“Mrs. Scawen does not wish me to sing,” said Anne, carelessly.

Lady Lucy looked a little surprised, but she said nothing, and went quietly with Henry to the piano.

“You are monstrous fond of Hugh, but you can’t bear *him*,” said Mr. Clavering, pointing to Henry, who was turning over the leaves for Lady Lucy.

“Oh! hush, Mr. Clavering!” exclaimed

Anne, alarmed lest he should be overheard.
“ You don’t know anything about it.”

“ I know a little too much, you mean,” he retorted.

“ Don’t you like Italian music ? ” asked Anne, turning to Lord Robert.

“ No ; I don’t care for music,” he replied ;
“ only there is something so expressive in these German ballads. Just as Coleridge found a meaning in Beethoven’s Symphonies, though he could not see the tune of the simplest composition. Do you sing any of Uhland’s words ? ”

“ Yes ; ‘ The Goldsmith’s Daughter,’ and the ‘ Hostess’s Daughter.’ ”

“ Ah ! ‘ The Hostess—*die Wirthin* ’—you can’t say innkeeperess. What a poet is Uhland ! We have no one exactly of his stamp—his delicate pencilling—his pale fragmentary sketches. He is the only man who has caught the manner of the old ballad—the abruptness—the unconnected style of narrative. A golden

chain, all unlinked. And then, in these days, when everything is crammed so extremely full of meanings and morals, it is delightful to get hold of poetry that has no drift at all — now a great many of his smaller pieces are merely ‘Swan-songs’ — sweet exclamations; that I would defy anybody to make a text upon.”

“Now, I think,” remarked Mr. Clavering, “that if a fellow has nothing to say, he ought to hold his tongue.”

“That’s a rule to which you strictly adhere, Mr. Clavering,” said Anne, laughing.

“Of course you know Uhland’s ‘Ferry’ — ‘*der Ueberfahrt*’ ” — said Lord Robert.

“Yes,” said Anne; “but I confess I like that song much better in the translation than the original; it is more musical — especially the last verse; which I think the best, in both versions.”

“How does the English verse run?” asked Lord Robert.

Anne repeated—

“ Take, oh ! boatman thrice thy fee,
Take, I give it willingly—
For, invisible to thee,
Spirits twain have passed with me.”

“ Ay,” said Lord Robert, quickly, “ and
the German has it—

‘ Nimm nur Fährmann, nimm die Miethe,
Die ich gerne dreifach biete ;
Zween, die mit mir überfahren,
Waren geistige Naturen.’

“ Yes ; the last line in the English is perfection. We have a very good language, Miss Scawen—I hope you don’t despise it. English, as spoken by well-born people, is a fine dialect—to be sure, it is horrible in the mouth of the vulgar : the tone of voice makes such a difference.”

“ Yes,” said Anne. “ A French writer speaks of three signs of race. The hair, the hands, and the feet ; he should have added, the voice.”

“ Very true ;” said Lord Robert, who had

a pleasant and cultivated tone of voice, and who certainly possessed none of the other indications that Dumas speaks of. "And now will you show me your brother's sketches?"

"Oh! with pleasure," said Anne, opening a portfolio. "They are done, you see, on odds and ends of paper—roughly enough, and not all very clean; but they are so precious to me."

"See what it is to have only one brother!" said Lord Robert, smiling. "Oh, no! I mistake—you have another."

Anne was silent. She *had* only one brother, she repeated to herself.

"But these are capital," he said. "Look at that fellow smoking—a kind of guerilla, I suppose—and those Indian women with baskets. Do come and look at these sketches, madam. They were drawn by Miss Scawen's brother."

"Ah! your brother is a sailor," said Lady

Orrington, coming to the table; "like my son—poor Jack."

"Poor! I wish I had half his complaint!" said Lord Robert. "He is in command of a seventy-four that might tempt Lord Nelson down from his column."

"It will be a long time before Hugh commands a seventy-four," said Anne, sighing.

"On my word they are very pretty," said Lady Orrington, examining the sketches through her double eyeglass. "Here are llamas, Bob—graceful creatures! And here is an aloë—a magnificent plant to be sure; and these muleteers at the inn door—the Posada, don't they call it?"

"Capital, all of them," said Lord Robert.

"Why don't you sketch, Bob?" asked her ladyship.

"Because I can't," replied her son.

"Nonsense! Any one with hands can sketch;—and eyes. I forgot eyes—and you are near-sighted. I never saw such sons as

mine. Mote is deaf, and you are blind—and Jack stutters—and Bill—Bill is mad, I think, he talks so much to himself.”

Anne thought it would be wrong to laugh. She looked gravely down upon the sketches.

“Orrington is not deaf, madam,” said Lord Robert.

“What, do you mean to say your brother is an impostor?” asked Lady Orrington.

“An arrant one,” said Lord Robert. “He hears every bit as well as you do. I think it my duty to warn everybody—I put you on your guard, Miss Scawen, if you should chance to meet him at Sherwood. It is all indolence. He escapes the trouble of bearing his part in the conversation, and he hears everything that people say—often what is not meant for him. If I had not my fortune to seek, I would follow his example—it must be excellent fun.”

Anne ventured to laugh now. Lady Orring-

ton turned her son out of his chair, saying, as she took possession of it,—

“Come, you have talked nonsense enough for one while ;—move off ; — you will be making Mr. Clavering jealous.”

“No—he may stop there,” said Mr. Clavering, in his blunt manner.

Lord Robert took the hint, and went away ; Anne followed his example, and crossed over to speak to Miss Raleigh.

Henry Scawen had meantime been conducting the different young ladies to the harp and piano, and then went to hang over Lady Lucy's chair, just where his father wished to see him.

He was such a nice eldest son to have in the house,—he always said and did the right thing ; but he never felt the right thing, you may make sure of that.

And now the party broke up. The ladies were shawled and handed to their carriages. Anne found herself with Mr. and Mrs. Scawen

and the Clayerings, standing in the deserted drawing-room. Mr. Scawen was in a good temper; he was growing proud of his daughter, he had heard her so much extolled; and of course he could not see, till people told him, that she was beautiful, and graceful, and accomplished. General Clavering was whispering a number of gratifying little remarks to Anne, when he perceived his son quietly stealing out of the room,—

“Wymond, my dear boy,” he exclaimed, “I hope you are not going to smoke—let me intreat you not to smoke!”

“I shall,” was Mr. Clavering’s dutiful reply.

“Now do consider the physician’s orders,” said the General. “Miss Scawen, perhaps you will have the kindness to lay your commands on him; I hope you will set your face against smoking; he cannot do a worse thing.”

“If I had any influence over him it would be quite at your service, General Clavering,” said Anne: “I think it a vile habit, and I

suppose," she added, pausing with her candle in her hand, and her head turned haughtily to Mr. Clavering, "that he will have the good sense to conform to your wishes."

And, bowing to the society, she passed out of the room, leaving Mr. Clavering at the open door, watching her up stairs, and muttering, "Well, I suppose she must have her way, as she always used to do."

"Well, children, what sort of an evening have you passed?" asked Lady Orrington, when they were in the carriage.

"Very pleasant," said Lady Lucy quietly.

"Oh! I am enraptured," said Lord Robert; "that girl, Lucy; why what a fine hand at description you are; how you raised one's expectations!—A pretty child!—good heaven! Why the girl thinks, talks, feels! Such women are not to be found; and then her air—I never saw anything so splendid. To

see her turn her head slowly into profile—and such a profile! —passionate — intelligent —like an Arabian, with a pedigree out of Solomon's stable."

"You always come to horses for your similes," said Lucy, smiling.

"And talk in a way you can't afford," added Lady Orrington.

"Why surely, madam, words cost nothing," said Lord Robert.

"I don't know that," said Lady Orrington, —"men talk themselves into love sometimes, and you won't deny *that* is expensive; she is not rich enough for you, Bob; but I have half a mind to send for Mote, because there's no saying. Just put the window down a little way."

But Lord Robert fell into such convulsions of laughter that he could not find the window pull.

"Oh! madam, you beat Talleyrand!" he exclaimed at last. "Lucy, my dear, allow me

to interpret that remark for your benefit. It is quite a little sum in the rule of three. You *can't* marry Mote, therefore mamma will be generous and offer him to Miss Scawen ; —you *can* marry the future Lord D—— ; therefore if mamma finds somebody else for Miss Scawen, Lord D—— is set at liberty ; and exchange is no robbery, and both parties will be pleased, for Mote is worth young Clavering any day.”

Lady Orrington joined in the laugh, and called Lord Robert “a naughty boy.” For Lady Lucy, her heart beat rather more quickly, and her nostril quivered proudly for a moment, and then wrapping her furs round her, she said calmly,—

“My dear Robert, if mamma has no objection, I think I should like the window up again ; it is always cold across Raleigh Common.

CHAPTER II.

Oh ! seek not, hope thou not too much
Of sympathy below.—
Few are the hearts whose one sweet touch
Bids the sweet fountain flow.
Few, and by still conflicting powers,
Forbidden here to meet.
Such ties would make this life of our's
Too fair for mortal feet.

MRS. HEMANS.

LADY ORRINGTON was quite in earnest when she proposed sending for the Marquis to Sherwood. She announced the next morning that she wished to see Mote, to consult him about some proposed alteration in a road through the wood behind Sherwood ; and as there was neither hunting nor shooting just then, and he hated town, she did not see why he should not come and fish there as well as any where

else. So Lucy was desired to write a letter to apprise him of his mother's wishes, at which request she coloured slightly, and Lord Robert laughed without interruption until she had done.

"Let me see, Lucy, how you have worded it?" he said, taking up the paper. "Oh! my dear, this is not diplomatic. 'Mamma wishes to consult you about the road through the wood.' What an inducement for an indolent man to post a hundred and fifty miles across the country, to superintend the making of a villanous cross-country road. Give me the pen, Lucy, I will show you how it ought to be. Dearest Orrington, you ought to begin. There, I have added the *est*; I can't endure a letter beginning plain *dear*, like a man."

"Oh! Robert, I shall have to copy it again."

"No, my dear, I'll do it for you; listen. 'Circumstances that I cannot divulge by letter,

but which *deeply* concern the happiness of us *both*, induce me to urge that you will *instantly* on the receipt of this letter set out for Sherwood, where we are all *impatiently* expecting your arrival.' Now, my dear Lucy, is not that better than your icy epistle : his curiosity will be piqued, he will order horses on the spot, and rush into Lancashire as fast as they will carry him."

"Now then, Bob, is that letter finished?" asked Lady Orrington.

"Directly, my dear madam."

"Oh ! mamma, it can't go in that state ; Orrington will think us mad," said Lady Lucy, hastily transcribing her disfigured epistle. "Robert has been writing such nonsense."

"That boy is as mischievous as a monkey," said Lady Orrington, coming between them at the writing table, and looking out from the old-fashioned watch at her side a large armorial seal.

“That seal is the masonic sign of the family,” said Lord Robert; “directly Orrington sees that seal, he knows it is all up with him,—come he must. I long for the play to begin, Lucy, as I used to long when a child for the pantomimes. How soon do you think he can possibly be here? When shall we get his reply?”

“Oh! I never knew Orrington answer a letter,—he comes; he had rather travel a hundred miles than put pen to paper. He will be here on Saturday, I dare say.”

“The presentation scene will be superb,” said Lord Robert. “Mamma showing so transparently what she means, and Orrington so delightfully unconscious, and that glorious girl just turning her beautiful proud eyes on him for a moment, with a wondering look, as if she never had seen any one so stupid; for you must allow, my dear madam, that he is sadly afflicted; his memory is shocking, he hardly remembers *you*, and as for Lucy and

myself, we have to be introduced to him, regularly every Christmas."

"If I could see you with your book instead of dawdling about your sister's work-table, and abusing your eldest brother, I should be better pleased. Where's your Sophocles or your Euclid? How are you to be Senior Wrangler if you waste your vacation in this manner?" exclaimed Lady Orrington. "Mote is a good son, and he ought to remember he is near forty, and I shall not close my eyes in peace until I see him married; he and Lucy are now my only care; as for you and Jack, if you never settle, so much the better; and I shall see about William when he returns from the Cape. And I shall ask Anne Scawen to come and spend a few days here sociably with Lucy."

"And young Clavering to spend a few days with me, had you not better?" said Lord Robert.

"Why, I'll tell you Bob, I'll have Anne

first for a little while, and then you may do as you like about Mr. Clavering."

Lady Lucy thoroughly vexed by the pertinacity with which they carried on these silly manoeuvres, sat passing her hand over her forehead.

"My dear child, you have a head-ache!" exclaimed Lady Orrington. "You took a chill last night; dinner visiting does not suit you; it never did. Robert, give your sister that easy chair. Could you think of anything that you would like for luncheon? — some arrow-root; a jelly, perhaps?"

"My dear mamma, no, thank you. I am really pretty well."

"My dear Lucy, a single woman, like you, cannot be expected to manage herself properly. You shall have a little sago pudding, with wine sauce; and, don't let that greedy boy eat it up when it comes to table."

And Lady Orrington, having ordered the pudding, bustled off to various other occupations.

Meantime, Anne, all unconscious of the plans laid to rob her of Mr. Clavering, was sitting in the drawing-room at King's Cope, enjoying the society of that amiable young gentleman. Henry had gone out fishing with the General, but Mr. Clavering had declined being of the party, and had taken his seat by the open window, near Anne's workframe, with a handkerchief full of chips of wood, out of which he was cutting a set of chessmen.

"This is a pleasanter prospect than when you were last here, Mr. Clavering," said Anne, as the sweetness of a thousand flowers came floating in at the window.

"I believe you," he said. "Look at my pawns, — I've made seven, and one bishop. Do you like them?"

"They are very handsome. What wood is this?"

"Oak. See, I have four penknives, as sharp as lancets."

“ When do you go back to your regiment, Mr. Clavering ? ”

“ What, do you want to get rid of me ? ”
he asked, angrily.

“ Oh ! no, Mr. Clavering.”

“ Well, then, I don't ever go back ! —
There ! I 've sold out.”

“ Dear me ! and what do you mean to do
with yourself ? ”

“ Perhaps I shall go into Parliament.”

“ Why, you are not old enough, Mr.
Clavering.”

“ Yes, I am ; I am of age.”

“ Ah ! I think I recollect. I thought you
were not older than Hugh.”

“ Hugh again ! ” said Mr. Clavering, colour-
ing up scarlet. “ Am I never to hear the
last of that fellow ? ”

Anne looked over her workframe in some
surprise, laughed a little scornfully when she
saw his angry countenance, and then went
on counting her threads.

There was a slight pause, and then Mr. Clavering, who had been looking steadily at her face ever since he spoke last, said, — “I suppose you are sulky, because I said that.”

“No, Mr. Clavering,” said Anne, smiling; “but I was rather surprised, because I thought you had grown up by this time.”

“What! I suppose I ’m not tall enough!” he exclaimed; “but I ’m as tall now as that fellow, Hardwicke!”

This was a random shot, but Anne coloured as deeply as he had done a minute before: so that he must have perceived it, had he not been indenting, with the point of his penknife, the pattern round the stem of one of his pawns.

“Have you ever chanced to hear of Mr. Hardwicke since,” asked she, trying to speak carelessly, and bending her head close to her work.

“Yes, I have; but I am not going to

tell you: I thought we had done with Hardwicke," he replied.

"Oh! Mr. Clavering, don't be ill-natured." she said, imploringly; for there was so much at stake, that she was willing to conciliate.

"Why, what is it to you!" he asked, trying to look over her workframe.

"Nothing; only, when one asks a question, it is very rude not to answer it," she returned.

"Well, he 's at the Cape, so it don't matter," Mr. Clavering began.

"At the Cape!" said Anne, hastily; "why, I thought his regiment was in India!"

"Well, if you know so much about it, you may tell it yourself," said her companion, doggedly.

And, although she endeavoured several times to entrap him into communicating what she so much wished to hear, he remained quite impenetrable.

At last she rose, and began to put by her work.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"Into the park," she replied.

"I don't care if I come with you," he said, collecting his chips together.

"But I wish to be alone!" said Anne, coldly.

"I shall come all the same," said Mr. Clavering.

"You will not come," said Anne, looking haughtily down. "You are disagreeable; and I wish to be out of your way. Try and remember, sir, that you are no longer a boy in want of a playfellow."

And she swept out of the room, leaving him perseveringly putting together all his scraps, as determined to follow her as if she had not spoken.

But, at any rate, she had the start of him, and he did not know which way she had gone. She had time to wander along the

brook, where she and Hugh were fishing that August eight years ago. There were the yellow water-lilies, and the tufts of forget-me-not, for her to brood over, and reflect, at her pleasure, on all the changes her fate had undergone since last she gathered those unchanging flowers. But now she was perplexed, almost beyond endurance, with what Mr. Clavering had let fall.

“What could he know about Arthur? How did it happen that he was at the Cape? Perhaps he had seen some one who knew him. How could she manage, without betraying too much interest, to make him speak? Perhaps, after all, she would then find he knew nothing worth hearing. Perhaps he just knew the number of his regiment, or the name of his colonel, or any other unimportant fact. And actually there he was, coming straight to the brook; she did believe he was grown more silly than before; indeed, she now thought him a decided idiot.”

In this opinion she did him injustice. Those friends who expected that he would ever behave himself in the smallest degree like other people, would find themselves grievously disappointed. His understanding had made a very leisurely progress, but it seemed as if it had grown at last. To say that he was now not more silly than most other people, would be but an equivocal compliment; he was now not more silly than most intelligent people. As far as his mind went, it was perfectly accurate. It clutched at truth like a vice, and never let it go. No one could argue him out of a conviction. He might go into the House at any moment with credit to himself, for he knew how to hold his tongue; and a good many frequenters of that august assembly would be very thankful if that knowledge were more generally diffused among the members.

As soon as he had advanced within speaking distance, he informed her that Mrs. Scawen

desired her to return to the house, for Lady Lucy and her brother were in the drawing-room.

This was worth being recalled for: all her early friendship for Lucy had revived. She hurried so quickly back, that Mr. Clavering could hardly keep up with her.

“ I say ! ” he exclaimed, panting for breath, and catching at the fringe of her scarf; “ if they ask you to stay at Sherwood, don't go ! ”

“ You or I must be dreaming, Mr. Clavering,” said Anne, disengaging her scarf with no pleased expression of countenance; “ I am surprised that you should venture to dictate to me.”

Almost the first words Lady Lucy spoke were to urge her mother's invitation.

Anne gladly and decidedly accepted at once.

Mrs. Scawen and Mr. Clavering looked equally angry and puzzled. It would not do

to make a scene before Lady Lucy and her brother; so Mrs. Scawen merely said in the tone that she so well knew how to render irritating, that she thought before Miss Scawen came to a decision on any subject, it would be advisable that she consulted her father.

Anne rose immediately and went to Mr. Scawen's study, and being admitted, was about to enter on her business, when he obligingly signed her to a chair, and began in a tone of unusual kindness,—

“Sit down, my dear, I am glad to tell you that you looked very well last night—you were generally admired; but General Clavering, who is an authority in such matters, said that he knew only two women in London who might compete with you in the regularity of your features. I don't imagine you to be vain, you see, or I should not repeat this.”

“Mrs. Scawen, sir, has taken care that I should not be vain,” said Anne, calmly.

“ Hem !—very proper,” said Mr. Scawen ;
“ but why did you not sing last night ? ”

“ Mrs. Scawen desired me not to sing, until
I could keep in tune,” replied Anne.

“ What ! after all those lessons from Rubini,
have you not learned to sing in tune ? ” asked
Mr. Scawen.

“ Oh ! yes, sir ; my ear was never at fault
—Rubini said so ; ” replied Anne, indifferently.

“ Why, then, what does Mrs. Scawen
mean ? ” asked her father.

“ Perhaps, sir, Mrs. Scawen may give you a
reason ; she has never given me one,” replied
Anne.

Mr. Scawen played with his leaf-cutter for
a few moments, and then changed the sub-
ject.

“ Well, my dear, there is every reason to
suppose, from the favourable opinion people
have formed of you, that you will make a
good marriage. I think I noticed that Lord
Robert was a good deal struck with you—

but you will remember he is a younger son — it will not do for you to think of him."

"I shall not think of him, sir," said Anne, calmly; "but he has just come over with Lucy, bringing me an invitation from Lady Orrington to stay a few days at Sherwood."

"Well, but how on earth is that to be managed, with young Clavering here?" asked her father, impatiently.

"It is for you, sir, to determine whether I go or not," said Anne, looking stately; "but for the Claverings, they appear to me to have nothing to do with the question. Henry is the proper companion for Mr. Clavering. When there was nobody else, and we were both much younger, I allowed him to follow me about, but now the case is altered, and I confess to you that his society annoys me."

To her surprise her father took this announcement very coolly, and merely asked,—

"Well, what does Mrs. Scawen say to it?"

"I don't know, sir; I never hold any communication with Mrs. Scawen," said Anne.

"There you are wrong," said her father.

"Perhaps, sir, all the wrong is not on my side," replied Anne.

"Well, I don't know about that," said Mr. Scawen; "but so long as you don't quarrel, I suppose you must make it out your own way. Women never can agree together. There is so much petty jealousy between them that *we* cannot understand. She sent you to me, did she?"

"Yes, sir; I accepted the invitation, as it was addressed solely to me; but Mrs. Scawen desired me to consult you. If you disapprove it, I will go back and retract what I have done."

"Oh, no! you may go," said Mr. Scawen; "but you will remember what I have said about Lord Robert."

Anne bowed her acquiescence, and returned to the drawing-room with the welcome intelligence that she was permitted to go to Sherwood.

“And pray how long shall you be gone?” asked Mr. Clavering, sullenly.

Anne coloured at the question, but went on speaking to Lady Lucy.

“Did you not hear Mr. Clavering speak to you?” asked Mrs. Scawen.

“Perfectly,” replied Anne; “but Mr. Clavering did not expect an answer.”

“Pray come early on Monday,” said Lady Lucy; “and perhaps, Mrs. Scawen, you will kindly allow me to walk down to the fish-ponds before I go. I long, Anne, to visit all our old haunts together.”

Mrs. Scawen, all smiles in a moment, begged that she would do so. Mr. Clavering instantly followed them into the hall, saying that he would come too.

Anne turned round impetuously.

“Oh, Lucy!” she exclaimed, “tell Lord Robert to keep him off; he is worse than the old man in ‘Sindbad.’ It was just the same thing three years ago. I cannot breathe while he follows me about; I almost feel as if I should lose my reason.”

“Why, dear Anne,” said Lady Lucy, looking wonderingly at her breathless face, “are you still the same passionate little thing? Robert, keep behind with Mr. Clavering. Do you remember the rage you were in with John, when he threw stones at the old carp? He quite adored you from that moment. This is the way, down this slope; oh! I remember it, and our standing with the landing net by that quince-tree there, while John and Hugh fished for eels. And what has poor Mr. Clavering done.”

“You see, Lucy, he is half witted; and yet papa makes so much of him, and he expects me to amuse him, which I will not, for I am more than half afraid of him, besides wearied

to death with his tiresome ways. You cannot tell the rest it will be to me to spend a few days with you at Sherwood—something like heaven; for until Hugh comes back, I have no friend at home; you can see that, I dare say.”

“Dear Anne, every one has some trial.”

“Not you, Lucy; there is Lady Orrington to care for you, and Lord Robert, I am sure, is very fond of you.”

“Yes, in his way; and I am very grateful for it; but sometimes we become unreasonable, and want to be loved in our own way. However, I have little reason indeed to complain of my lot; and you, Anne, will soon marry, and then—”

“Marry! good gracious, Lucy!”

“My dear Anne, what a colour; I did not mean to frighten you. Now we must really go. Robert has come to the end of his stock of patience. Good bye then, Anne, till Monday.”

“And mind you don’t keep her long,” said Mr. Clavering, who had had the civility to hand Lady Lucy into the carriage; “I am not going to be left alone more than a day or two, I tell you.”

CHAPTER III.

Frank. Prithee talk not
Of death and graves—thou art so rare a goodness,
As death would rather put itself to death
Than murder thee.

FORD.

JUST as Lucy had predicted, Lord Orrington arrived on the Saturday evening. As they were sitting in the dusk before dinner, he walked coolly in, to the great delight of Lord Robert, who had begun to fear that he was not coming.

He was the best looking of the Sherwoods, and resembled Lucy in features, and the beauty of his hands, also in that fine presence sometimes to be observed in people of ancient birth, which depends on a certain important

outline of the bust, and which inferior persons in vain try to imitate by holding their heads up.

“Why, here’s Mote I declare!” exclaimed Lady Orrington; “I am very glad to see you, my dear! Where do you come from last? I addressed to you, Berkley Square, but I suppose you were out of town, and no wonder this hot weather. And now shall we hasten dinner for you?”

The greater part of this address being inaudible to Lord Orrington, he gravely replied, “How do you do?” and took a chair next his sister.

He seemed very pleased to see Lucy again, pulled a purple case from his pocket, containing a splendid bracelet, and gave it her, remarking at the same time how much she was grown.

It need not be said that she had not grown a quarter of an inch during the last six years of her life; then asked if that was

Robert, a question which he answered in the affirmative with a very grave face, preparatory to the peals of laughter in which he meant to indulge when his brother went up to dress, and then drawing his chair towards Lady Orrington, he said hesitatingly, as if trying to remember why he had come there,—

“Well, Madam, and about,—these poachers, what is your difficulty?”

“Oh, nothing about poachers!” said Lady Orrington rubbing her double eyeglass with her glove; “it is a road that I think they have no business to cut across the skirt of my wood, yonder. Bob knows where it is, he will show you to-morrow. You see these people here are ready enough to take advantage of a widow, and Bob there, knows nothing about law, so I thought you had better come and look to it.”

“I am sure, Madam, I shall be most happy — a road — I think I’ll dress;” said

Lord Orrington, and then he walked out of the room.

“So that is comfortably settled,” said Lady Orrington. “Lucy, my dear, what a beautiful bracelet! I am sure it is quite a mercy that poor Mote in his absent fits didn’t bring you a necklace, or a hoop ring, or something else that a single woman has no business to wear.”

“It is very kind of Orrington to think of me,” said Lady Lucy, clasping the bracelet on her exquisite arm; “don’t you think, Mamma, he is like William?”

“Well, they are like,” said Lady Orrington, “but Mote is taller; and I am sure I am doing a very kind action by Anne Scawen, giving her such a chance, and I hope everything may turn out as I wish. Bob, I wonder you are not ashamed to go on laughing in that foolish manner, for I suppose as usual you are laughing at poor Mote.”

“I plead guilty,” said Lord Robert, as

soon as he could speak, "he is better than usual, I think ; 'poachers,' and, 'Is that Robert?' why, who on mature deliberation was it likely to be, Lucy? and then I am happy to see he has gone on 'crying wolf,' and pretending to be deaf, till he has become so in good earnest. We ought to address him through a speaking trumpet ! Fancy Mamma at the head of the table, imploring him to take soup, through that musical instrument, and then handing it to Lucy, that she might continue the conversation in the same key !"

The idea of the quiet Lucy with a speaking trumpet was too much for Lady Orrington ; she joined in the laugh, scolding her son at the same time.

"You are a good for nothing boy, and ought to be ashamed of yourself," she said ; "for Mote is a kind brother to you, as you well know."

"Yes, Madam, but he wounds my feelings," said Lord Robert ; "just imagine my

distress at finding that I make so little impression on my friends, that they must ask every six months if that is *me*! As if, like the children, I had had my curls cut off, or gone into trowsers, or discarded frills, since our last meeting."

"Well, I hope you will have the grace to be quiet now," said Lady Orrington, "for here comes your brother."

"Ah! he little knows what a treat is in store for him," said Lord Robert, giving his arm to Lady Lucy, as Lord Orrington led his mother into the dining-room; "do you think now, Lucy, that mamma will break the news at dessert, or wait till the coffee for her '*coup d'etat*?'"

"Robert, I wish you would not," implored Lady Lucy, as she took her seat at the table.

"Fish, my dear?—in one moment: and what sort of a girl, candidly, is this Anne Scawen? Has she the usual young ladies' craving after strawberry leaves?"

“No: that I am sure she has not,” said Lucy.

“I tell you what, Lucy,” said Lord Robert, suddenly, “if she or I were a little richer, Mote should not have her,—she is too good for him. Till I saw her, I could not have believed in such talismanic eyes,—like the wizard’s ring in Thalaba: do you remember the description?”

“Oh, yes, Robert; but you keep me in constant fear.”

“All honour to Southey,—what a brain he had,” said Lord Robert; “it was not the passion, it was not the nature—it was the invention of the man that most surprises me. In ‘Kehama,’ the novelty and the variety scarcely give one time to breathe.”

“I thought it was all taken from some mythology,” said Lady Lucy.

“Ah, there! you are so literal; you’ve *burked* my disquisition.”

“What a word, my dear Robert.”

"Well, you are hard to please this evening ; do you mean to be young-lady like, and dine off an artichoke. I dare say I can find you something forbidden ; hot crab ; oh ! that 's delightfully wrong. Lucy, my dear, shall I help you ?"

"What is Robert saying, Madam ?" asked Lord Orrington.

"Nonsense, my dear, as usual," replied his mother.

"If you expect, after that, my dear madam, that I shall forward your little project, you will find yourself singularly mistaken," said Lord Robert. "I shall make strong love to the young lady myself, and tell Orrington that she is a Russian princess. I don't think he understands Russian, does he, Lucy."

"Eh, Bob ?" said Lord Orrington, who caught his own name, as people are apt to do.

"I was merely remarking," said Lord Ro-

bert, with a perfectly steady countenance, “on that highly respectable custom observed by the Chinese emperors, of opening the agricultural labours of the year in person. A monarch, surrounded by his court, driving the plough, under an umbrella, is a more practical moral than the Comedy of Knute, and I think ought to be followed by the great landowners of this country,—always in Mandarin costume; it would be nothing without the tail and the glass button.”

“You must speak louder in the House, Bob;” said Lord Orrington, with perfect good humour; though as Lord Robert had perversely spoken in a low tone, he had not caught a word of his discourse.

“So long as he says something a little more to the purpose,” added Lady Orrington.

“But seriously, Lucy,” said Lord Robert, “that is the only scrap of poetry in all the doings of that most prosaic and revolting

people. The delegate of heaven opening the earth, and throwing in the first handful of seed. Thereby solemnizing the toil of the people, ennobling labour, and uniting the pursuits and hopes of rich and poor : there's more meaning in that than in laying the first stone of a workhouse, or a bridge."

"They are a horrid set, the Chinese," said Lady Orrington ; "I am sure I can't be too thankful that Bill is no farther off than the Cape."

"Whether the Kaffirs are at all more agreeable as neighbours, is entirely a matter of taste," said Lord Robert ; "I dare say Lucy knows ; she is William's principal correspondent."

"I dread to think of them !" said Lady Lucy, with an expression of terror.

"Don't be frightened, my dear," said Lord Orrington, kindly ! "it's impossible a pack of ignorant savages should put Bill at all out of his way,—one does not quite expect a Sher-

wood to be knocked on the head by a dirty Hottentot. I dare say they bother him driving away his cattle, and that sort of thing ; but you know they can't do him any harm."

Lord Robert, with the most stolid expression of face, was in a quiet ecstasy at his brother classing the Kaffirs and the Hottentots together.

"I don't know about harm," said Lady Orrington ; "I always wish to recollect that there is a Providence at Cape Town just as much as in England ; but there have been some very awkward affairs with those Kaffirs, —there was poor young Lynn, Sir Geoffrey's nephew, was murdered in a most shocking manner ; they found his body in one place, and his head in another, and his eyes—"

Here Lady Orrington's interesting narrative was interrupted by Lucy, who quietly fell from her chair, perfectly senseless.

"Dear me I quite forgot," she said, following Lord Orrington, as he carried his sister

into the drawing-room, and placed her on a sofa, "poor Lucy can't bear anything of that kind. You see, my dear, what a poor thing she is; I am sadly afraid she will never marry; there's no energy about her,—that will do, my dear,—you will drown her if you go on so."

For Lord Orrington, supporting his sister with one arm, was pouring a continuous stream of eau de Cologne, on her head, from a tall Dresden jug that he had seized from the table.

Having arrested this agreeable douche before her daughter was entirely saturated, she next directed her talents to improve the spirits of the reviving Lucy on the old-fashioned system, that all nervous seizures should be scolded away.

"Come Lucy, my dear, what nonsense is this? how you have frightened us all. Sit up and look about you—here you are in the drawing-room, quite safe; now, my dear,

recover yourself—don't be silly. I am going to give you some sal volatile ! Why, what were we talking about ?—the murder of poor Captain Lynn ! well, it was a very sad thing, but it can't be helped ; it was the will of God : and it would be wicked to murmur ; and it is not," she said, addressing Lord Orrington, "it is not as if she had ever known the young man, but they never met in their lives."

"She was thinking of Bill, Madam," said Lord Orrington, who still held his sister's hand.

Lucy looked gratefully up to her brother, but Lady Orrington could not understand this.

"Why, my dear, that's impossible ; she never could mistake Bill for Lynn, the names are not alike—did you, Lucy, my love ?"

Lucy smiled at her brother, and shook her head.

"However, she is quite well now, and there's Anne Scawen coming to see her on

Monday, that will cheer her up a little. And now, my dear Mote, you had better go back and finish your wine."

"I have done, thank you, Madam."

"Well then, suppose Lucy gives us a little music—some lively song my dear."

"To-morrow, madam," said Lord Orrington, who not being quite gifted with his mother's iron nerves, thought it possible that a person just out of a fainting fit might not be in the humour to sing.

Nor did his attention stop here—for he rarely saw his sister for many days to come without asking her with a puzzled look of interest, if she had quite lost her head-ache.

CHAPTER IV.

Ah ! Palinode, thou art a world's child,
Who touches pitch, mote needs be defiled.

Shepherd's Calendar.

Tell wit how oft she wrangles
In tickel points of niceness :
Tell wisdom she entangles
Herself in over-wiseness.

SIR W. RALEIGH.

ANNE had the great but undesired honour of being driven to Sherwood by her brother Henry. He wished to pay his respects to the Lady Lucy, and he thought it a good excuse to accompany his sister. Next to the society of Mrs. Scawen, Anne shunned and disliked that of Henry. She had learned by experience that there are but two things which enable people to live together smoothly—courtesy and affection. The most dissimilar tempers will go on calmly enough under

the shield of courtesy; and those most careless of ceremony, when they love each other, will never take offence.

But without either safeguard, the intercourse of relations is not very pleasant, and had better be as rare as possible. So Henry being quite exempt from both these prejudices, made the journey very amusing. He sneered at Anne's beautiful toilette; with the remark hackneyed by all the young men who have ever run over to Paris, that English women never know how to dress. Then he sneered at Hugh, which was harder to bear—and expressed his disgust at sailors, at their ignorance of society; at their credulity; at everything, true or untrue, which he could think of to ascribe to them.

Anne was far too full of scorn to make any reply to this abuse, except when Henry asked her a direct question, and then her answers were short and bitter enough. It was a comfort to her when they saw before

them the iron gates and elm avenue of Sherwood House; because Henry in society was very polite to her. He knew as well as any body, that it was underbred to affect to despise his sister, though it is very easy to sympathise with such ill-mannered young men as make a parade of doing so; for they naturally think that anybody connected with *them*, must as a matter of course be inferior. They are mistaken sometimes it is true, but the theory is a good one.

So having exasperated her all the way to his heart's content, nothing could be more pleasant and frank than he seemed in the presence of Lady Orrington. She thought him a very agreeable young man, and was very glad he had come over; and as Lucy was at the lake feeding her water-fowls, she advised Henry to conduct his sister thither, after having engaged him to dine at Sherwood on the following day.

Lucy was standing at the water-side, scat-

tering bread to a group of beautiful moorhens. She looked so delicate in her fluttering white dress, and blue cachemire folded closely round her, that even Henry was struck with a something in her air, and remarked carelessly to his sister as they advanced, that he really thought Lady Lucy was rather a good-looking girl.

This scanty praise provoked Anne, who though she said little, always *thought* in superlatives, and the tone in which she retorted "Do you think so?" appeared to Henry as if she did not accord in the sentiment.

"I forgot," he replied, ironically; "I actually committed the *gaucherie* of praising one woman to another—of course you don't agree; nevertheless, my dear, it would be well if you were to take a hint from Lady Lucy's composed manner, for your own is '*on ne peut pas plus bourgeoise*.'"

Anne, to do her justice, cared nothing for his remarks when they became personal,

he was welcome to abuse herself, but she was apt to fire up when he attacked her friends.

She was now anxious to see whether Henry was likely to make any impression on Lady Lucy. She saw he wished to do so, and there were few things that would have more distressed her than his success. She rather over-rated the misery of such an alliance to most women; for Henry's unfeeling selfishness did not make much show: and it was his taste to conform to the opinions of the world in most things. He would never make an outrageously bad husband; but a woman of sensibility might possibly die of disgust and disappointment if she were deluded into marrying him. So at least Anne thought; and it was with the keenest interest that she watched the slight blush that stole over Lucy's ivory cheek as she returned Henry's greeting. There was one comfort—if Lucy had any penetration, she would

soon see that as soon as Henry grew a little intimate, he always talked of himself: not that he was ill-mannered enough to start that only subject, but whatever the topic, he was sure to work it round to the one thought uppermost in his mind. *His* horses—*his* ways—*his* plans—*his* pleasures—and then all his selfish axioms were sure to drop out—how he studied and took care of himself, and forwarded his own views and interests; and boasted of doing so, till Anne with all her scornful silence, used to shiver with passion and disdain.

He could not well prolong his stay just then. Lucy mentioned that her brothers were fishing at the other side of the lake, and politely offered to summon Lord Robert; but as Henry was to dine with him on the next day he would not hear of interrupting his sport, and so took his leave at once.

“I am so happy, to-day!” said Anne, “I had a letter from Hugh, this morning. Oh!

he is quite well; but I have still eight months to wait before I see him."

"Only eight months? I almost envy you. I should be glad if I were sure of seeing William in as many years," said Lady Lucy.

"Dear Lucy, what old women you and I shall be in eight years time."

"Why, I hardly know. Harriet is eight years older than I am, and I can assure you she does not think herself an old woman."

"But, then, married women are always thought younger than single."

"That is true."

"Not that I meant to be so rude as to say you would be single eight years hence."

"Dear Anne, and if you did, I should not think you rude; it is very likely. William always said so."

"Dear Lucy, and why?"

"Because he was complimentary enough to think that I was a little fastidious in my

ideas, and people diminish their chance of marrying, if they set their estimate too high."

"Lucy, have you heard anything about Mr. Clavering? Do tell me, for I am very anxious to know."

"I certainly have heard your names mentioned together; but that will be always the case where you have a young man staying in the house: although, I will own to you, that Mr. Scawen did not precisely say, but hinted to Mamma, that there was something between you."

"Ah! I thought so," replied Anne, despondingly; "we shall have a terrible scene when the time comes. I don't know what will become of me. Henry against me, and Mrs. Scawen, and papa so very positive; and there's no hope of putting it off till Hugh comes back, or I should care for none of them."

"Indeed, my dear Anne," said Lucy, gently; "I can imagine the pain of acting against

your father's wishes in any case ; but as you seem so strongly to dislike Mr. Clavering, your duty is plain to reject him, and it is some comfort to see clearly what ought to be done."

"Dislike him!" exclaimed Anne, indignantly: "I can't describe the disgust,—I—he's an idiot, Lucy, or very near it, with just enough shrewdness to make him so dogged!—rather than give him a word of encouragement, I would run away! And as for acting against papa's views, I am sorry to say, Lucy, I am not so good as you, and I don't feel it."

"I can't help smiling to see you just what you used to be as a little girl," said Lady Lucy; "now, you know, you are making the worst of yourself; and, as for running away, my dear Anne, where would you run to?"

"Oh! Lucy, I have not formed any plan," said Anne, laughing. "I suppose I should

run to Datchley,—all my thoughts and wishes bend that way.”

“There is Mamma on the terrace,” said Lucy; “shall we meet her?”

“Well, young ladies!” said Lady Orrington; “I hope you have not got wet footed down by the lake; there’s Bob come in from fishing, in such a plight! the boy is a regular water-rat.—How, sir! are you behind me all this time? I thought you had gone in to change your clothes?”

“It was not worth while,” said Lord Robert, coming forward eagerly, to greet Anne. “Miss Scawen, I am delighted to see you.”

“And where is Mote?” asked Lady Orrington.

“Coming, like christmas,” said Lord Robert, pointing to the Marquis, who was advancing slowly from the other end of the terrace, looking vacantly on the ground, and trailing his stick after him as he walked.

“My dear Orrington,” said her ladyship,

arresting her son in his progress down the walk, "I am anxious to introduce you to Miss Scawen: the daughter, you know, of Mr. Scawen, of King's Cope, your father's old friend."

Lord Orrington paused, took off his hat to Anne, quite mechanically, for he evidently did not see her, or hear what his mother said; and then sauntered slowly past the group.

"It was all his fault that I got wet," said Lord Robert, as he walked on by the side of Anne: "he was sitting like Dibdin's 'Waterman,' thinking of nothing at all, with his line dangling over the side of the boat, when he hooked a tremendous carp; the brute very naturally tried to get away, and, being as strong as a good sized donkey, very nearly drew my respected brother over the side. Well! I should have offered no opposition to the carp's wishes as far as Orrington was concerned; indeed, I should have liked to see

the effect produced on his faculties by such an unexpected change in his position, but unluckily the carp had got in his gills my very best hook, a favourite hook that I had no mind to lose, so I jumped into the water breast high with a landing net, and got my tackle back again."

"And the carp, too, I hope; we will have it stewed," said Lady Orrington.

"Oh! the carp, too; and when I got back, pretty wet, with the brute leaping and struggling in the net, Orrington said to me, quietly, 'Bob, had not I something just now at the end of my line?'—'Yes,' I replied: 'a fish at one end, and a—Dr. Johnson, at the other!'"

"My dear," said Lady Orrington to Anne, "never attend to what that boy says of Mote. like many clever young men in the present day, he is apt to think everybody else is stupid. Now that does not follow."

"Miss Scawen," said Lord Robert, eagerly,

"did I ever give you the impression that I thought *you* stupid?"

"No: I cannot say you ever did," replied Anne, still laughing at his narrative.

"Absent people don't show to advantage," said Lady Orrington: "people don't know what there is in them."

"And I am sure they don't know themselves," interposed Lord Robert.

"But Mote has excellent abilities, and if he had chosen to exert himself, he might have made a distinguished figure in public life," pursued Lady Orrington, overlooking her son's little interruption.

"That makes the hundredth man pointed out to me as a person capable of making an immense figure if he chose," said Lord Robert: "I don't believe it! everybody chooses: but it takes a great deal to make a figure in public life at this time of day."

"My dear," said Lady Orrington, address-

ing Anne, "has your brother Henry any wish to enter Parliament."

"I do not know, I never heard him say so," replied Anne.

"He ought I think," said Lady Orrington; "come; it's time for us all to go in. Bob, just run and tell Mote that's the dressing bell, he won't hear it."

At dinner, Lord Robert was extremely attentive to Anne. He certainly liked and admired her very much; but his chief object was so to engross her, that Lord Orrington, who never made an effort to talk, should not have an opportunity of getting in a word.

It was in vain that Lady Orrington tried to include him in the conversation. Really deaf, and so indolent that he never endeavoured to catch what was going on, he generally remained silent.

In the evening, Lucy and Anne sang together. Two such beautiful voices were rarely to be met with; but Lord Orrington sat

reading the *Allgemeine Zeitung* the whole time. Only when it was over he told Lucy good-naturedly that she was very much improved: and now and then glanced at Lord Robert, who, leaning on the piano remained talking to Anne, while Lucy played one of Mendelsohn's songs without words.

Some allusion to the German newspaper which Lord Orrington was reading (the Sherwood's were all good linguists), brought them to Schiller and his ballads.

"Have you seen Retsch's last outlines to the song of the Bell?" asked Lord Robert, "let me show them to you."

Lucy joined them. Lord Orrington turning his chair a little round, sat looking not at the outlines, but at the group.

"This account of the storm, reminds me of some passages in the Lay of the Last Minstrel; there's the same hurry in the lines," said Lord Robert.

"That boy thinks of nothing but poetry,"

said Lady Orrington, turning from her worsted work ; “poetry and gardening are tastes that belong only to youth and age. You never see a middle-aged man reading verses.”

“Meaning Mote,” said Lord Robert ; “I dare say not ! ”

“I like that group of children,” said Lady Lucy ; “the two boys fighting for the ship remind me so of Geoffery and William Lynn.”

“Little angels ! ” said Lord Robert ; “which is your favourite, Miss Scawen ? ”

“The scene after the fire,” said Anne.

“The charm of the poem to me, is that exquisite sketch of the wife,” said Lord Robert ; “what a lovely description of a class of women now totally extinct ; one who does not despise the household cares ; the description of her laying the linen in the sweet scented drawers, seems to me the perfection of housewifery.”

“Dear Robert,” said Lady Lucy, “surely

a housekeeper could do that as well as the mistress."

"Not half so well, depend on it," said Lord Robert; "I have an impression that we have very indistinct ideas of the domestic comfort of our ancestors; I am certain there was a finish, a delicacy in their preparations of which we know nothing. Do not you think so, Miss Scawen?"

"No, really," said Anne; "I imagine that the housekeeper of to day is just as fitted for her office as the lady of a century back. She has as much education, as much sense of propriety and comfort as the lady then had; and therefore she is qualified to take her place; and the lady set free from labour, ought to take a much higher post in domestic life."

"You say, 'ought to take,'" said Lord Robert, laughing.

"Yes," returned Anne, "because I cannot help seeing that all this leisure is sometimes

very much abused and idled ; and then the mistress, instead of being something much greater than a house-keeper, is in my opinion infinitely less."

"I don't give up my idea for all that," said Lord Robert ; "those scented drawers should be the lady's care ; and as for confectionary made by high-born fingers, it would of course be only comparable to angel's food."

"It is very well that you cannot carry all your whims into effect," said Lady Lucy. "I for one could very well dispense with burning my face over a kitchen fire, especially as I should be sure to burn the conserves into the bargain."

"Ah ! but you are a Wordsworthian, and therefore live upon mountain rills," said Lord Robert.

"Are you on my side ?" asked Lady Lucy.

"I know so little poetry," replied Anne ;
"I remember Miss Elder reading me a few

passages from the 'Excursion;' but it is not fair to judge a poet by fragments."

"There are some pretty lines by Withers," said Lady Lucy, "which always seem to me applicable to Wordsworth."

' That from everything I saw
I could some instruction draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
Through the meanest object's sight.' "

"Certainly, if there are none other to be had, it is good philosophy to make use of the meanest," said Lord Robert; "but I should be very sorry to live in a world where there are no objects but those which are mean."

"I cannot argue with you, Robert," said Lucy, smiling; "I must be content to enjoy Wordsworth myself, and leave his defence to abler heads."

"Let us appeal to Orrington," said Lord Robert; "he will be sure to throw a new light upon the subject."

"Is he not too bad?" asked Lucy.

“Much,” said Anne.

“Come now,” said Lady Orrington, going towards the group, “those young ladies who wish for any beauty sleep, had better go to bed. Bob ring for candles.”

“Are you breaking up, Madam?” asked Lord Orrington.

“Yes, my dear; why?”

“Oh! I thought we were all very comfortable,” he returned.

“He would like us to sit there all night,” said Lord Robert; “it is so fatiguing to walk up to bed! Would it not be a pleasing attention on my part, Lucy, if I were to swing a basket for him over the stair-head. Evans and I could draw him up.”

“I am vexed with myself when I laugh at you,” said Lady Lucy, trying to suppress a smile.

“Then, my dear, learn not to give way to your emotions,” said Lord Robert; “feeling is generally in the wrong.”

"Nay," said Anne, "is it not Talleyrand who says, mistrust first emotions for they are generally right."

"I think he said, 'first impressions,' but it is nearly the same thing," said Lord Robert.

"It is dangerous only when unmixed with judgment I suppose," said Lucy.

"Feeling unmixed with judgment is seldom wrong in the ordinary sense of the word," said Lord Robert, "but it is exceedingly inconvenient ; it does not pourtray events in false colours, but in colours so strong, as to be wholly out of keeping with ordinary affairs ; and now having taken both sides, after the manner of the schools, allow me, ladies, to present you with your tapers, wishing them torches for your sakes."

"My dear Lucy," said Lady Orrington, stopping her, "will you not have a little white wine whey ?"

"No indeed, thank you, Mamma."

"I am afraid, my dear, by the look of your eyes, you have caught cold, standing so long by the water; a cup of arrow-root, suppose?"

"Take it, my dear," said Lord Robert, "and make Mademoiselle Sophie eat it. Mamma is so happy doctoring anybody. It ought to be one of your articles with your maids, that they should despatch all your superfluous gruel."

"Hold your tongue, and open the door," said Lady Orrington, laughing. "Good night my loves! — Now, my dear Mote, what do you think of her?"

"She is a very fine girl, Madam," said Lord Orrington, coolly; "and Bob seems very far gone."

CHAPTER V.

Ah ! poverina mia, les hommes tout au monde pour désoler les femmes ; et le meilleur d'entre eux ne vaut pas la dernière d'entre nous.

G. SAND.

Mel. Where I find worth
I love the keeper 'till he let it go,
And then I follow it.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

Now it is rather a trial, when you have sent a hundred miles for a person for one especial purpose, to find that he is possessed with an idea exactly opposite to your views.

Lady Orrington spent some time in trying to convince her son that his notion was perfectly unfounded—Bob in love ! at his age ! She should like to see him ! She would be glad to know what would become of his studies ! Beside, she knew his character—

he was not the sort of person—like all young men, he was willing enough to amuse himself when a pretty girl came in his way, and that was all !”

As usual, half this address was inaudible to Lord Orrington, and, perhaps, for this reason he remained unconvinced.

“ Well, madam,” he said, when his mother paused for breath, “ the long and the short of it seems to be that you don’t want Bob to make up to the young lady ; and, therefore, you had better get him out of the way ; he could go back with me to Mote for the rest of his vacation, and then return straight to Cambridge.”

“ Oh ! no, my dear ; he will be finding his way to Newmarket, and learning to gamble, or some mischief. Your poor father was so fond of the turf, that I am sure the taste must be lurking in some of you.”

“ Not in me,” said Lord Orrington ; “ I

have not been near a race-course these twelve years."

"And a good thing too," said Lady Orrington. "I often think of the epithet Lord Chesterfield applied to Newmarket—a place of iniquity and ill-manners. I do not wish to reflect on your poor father, but when I think of the sums he lost, and, what was worse, *won*, I had need take care to keep Bob out of harm's way."

"I thought he never won, madam," said Lord Orrington.

"Yes, he did, once my dear; he won a hundred guineas, I give you my word, of a chimney-sweep! It made my blood run cold!"

"Did he, indeed?"

"Ay, did he; or, I believe it was a dustman. Yes, we must not be too hard on your poor father—it was a dustman—those creatures make fortunes sometimes—think of such a being taking money out of his

pocket, or out of his hat, I should not wonder, and putting it into the hand of a marquis !”

“Perhaps you mean a miller, madam. I remember a hearty old fellow who had the fancy to wear a great grey beard and a broad hat ; they used to call him ‘The Dusty Miller.’ I believe he had been a mill-owner. He was very rich.”

“I dare say, my dear, you are right ; but I cannot fancy a gentleman taking those creature’s earnings — for you know those people *do* earn their money. Well, men are very different from women.”

“Every one to their taste, madam,” said Lord Orrington, as he took up his candle.

“Thank Heaven *that* is not yours,” thought Lady Orrington, as she slowly wended her way to her room. “I hope there is no truth in his idea about Bob taking a liking to Anne Scawen—she is a charming girl, but it will not do—I think he would never be

so foolish ; but I shall look pretty sharp after Master Bob, that I promise him !”

Lady Orrington was just the sort of person to be as good her word ; so the next morning when the young ladies rose from the breakfast table to follow their own devices, and Lord Robert showed some disposition to attach himself to their party, she arrested his steps.

“ Now, sir, where are your books ?” she asked. “ You are not going to ramble the morning away, I do hope ! These young ladies have no degrees to take, you recollect. I like to see you at your ‘ Euclid,’ or your ‘ Butler’s Analogy.’ ”

Lord Robert, half laughing, suffered his mother to urge him towards the door ; while Anne and Lady Lucy, not sorry to be alone, escaped into the grounds.

They took their work into the old summer-house, which had formerly been the seat of their childish games.

“How pretty the island looks from this spot,” said Anne. “I should like to sketch it.”

“You shall do it to-morrow,” said Lucy. “Do you remember our tea-party on Robert’s birth-day? The seat is still standing among the guelder roses, though deplorably broken and mildewed.”

“Yes; how perverse children are—to choose the island, of all places! And Lord John and Hugh brought over the urn in the boat.”

“Yes; and all the tea things; and John sat in the stern eating the rout-cakes, almost within reach of Mdlle. Dalmont.”

“Oh! Lucy, what happy days!”

“Yes; but—you will perhaps think me extravagant—not worthy days. There is more satisfaction in the lapse of time, when we begin to feel how we should spend it.”

“Ah! you are so good, Lucy.”

“Nay, dear Anne; I have told you of my feelings, not my actions. I am no sectarian.

I do not imagine that every hour should be marked by some good deed : there is neither strength nor opportunity for this in most people. I merely think, if we are actuated by a sense of responsibility, time, as it passes from us, is more enjoyed, and less regretted. Now, children feel nothing of this."

"I am a wretch compared to you ! My life is a struggle, and a warfare ! It is not all my fault : but I have none of your good ways !" exclaimed Anne.

"No ; your good ways are all your own—you strange, passionate creature," said Lady Lucy.

They worked in silence for some time ; then Anne said, without looking up,—

"It is a stupid question, Lucy ; but, do you think Lord William likely to know a young gentleman of the name of Hardwicke, who is in some regiment at the Cape ?"

"Yes ; it is singular," said Lady Lucy, who, quite unconscious of Anne's heightened

colour, was unravelling a skein of wool; "William mentioned a young man of that name in one of his recent letters. Is he an acquaintance of yours?"

"I will tell you," said Anne, with a feeling something like suffocation at her chest as she spoke. "We met him when we were spending the holidays, with a connection of Mrs. Scawen's, in Scotland: and Mr. Clavering, just to annoy me, told me that he had heard something about him; but what, he would not say.

"Nothing very good, I apprehend," said Lady Lucy, beginning very quietly to wind her wool. "I will tell you how William came to mention him to me. I wrote him, that a Miss Hardwicke, whom we used to meet in town — a very handsome girl — was married to an acquaintance of his, a Colonel Mordaunt: and he remarked that he had a brother of the young lady's in his regiment — a very wild young man, who had

just been getting into a terrible scrape. But William had been doing all he could to screen him, because he came of a respectable family. Now, as William is not particularly lenient to the follies of people, young or old, you may be sure he meant the family was very good and ancient. William, if he has a fault, is rather proud."

"Do you know what the young man's Christian name was?" asked Anne, in a low voice.

"Arthur, or Alfred, or something of the kind. There is another brother, I think — intended for the church. Isabel used often to speak of her brother, Maurice."

Anne's working implements were dropping, one by one, and she was growing paler and paler.

"And do you know what he had done?" she asked, in a faltering tone.

"Some foolish habit the young officers had of molesting the Dutch inhabitants. They

painted some absurd sign on the house of a tradesman: and you know it is very important to conciliate the Dutch residents. William said he had a good deal of trouble about the affair. He hinted that the young gentleman drank rather too freely; and, besides, there was something William did not tell me, which I saw in the paper — about this Dutchman's daughter, — something very bad. William always sends us the *Cape Town Journal*. This Mr. Hardwicke had been but a very short time in his regiment; it was for the sake of his family, William exerted himself: for there is nothing he hates so much as people making themselves public by those vulgar frolics."

"He was so—so very different," Anne said, faintly.

"Perhaps so; but the army is such a school! William allows that, though he loves his profession; only he was always so self-willed, that it would have been out of any body's power

to make *him* do wrong. Example was likely to have no influence on *his* character. But now William's regiment has left Cape Town ; they are far up the country, so that Mr. Hardwicke may have less temptation to make himself conspicuous."

"Do you know anything more about him?" asked Anne, resolving, desperately, to learn the worst.

"William said he was very extravagant," said Lucy; "but no wonder—that is quite an inheritance; for the father, Sir Charles Hardwicke, is terribly involved, and yet such an agreeable man! But we have all been brought up in a horror of extravagance, Mamma thinks it is so nearly allied to dishonesty."

"You know Sir Charles?" asked Anne.

"Yes, or rather Harriet does; it has been with her that I have visited the family; they are neighbours of the Lynns—Dorsetshire people. Lady Hardwicke is a great invalid;

but her house in town is the pleasantest I know. I do not at all like London parties; but at Lady Hardwicke's there is no crowd, no noise, no gêne, and always some of the people one is interested to see. I used to enjoy her Thursdays. Then she had such beautiful flowers. The inner drawing-room was almost curtained with rare creepers growing against the walls."

"And her daughter?"

"I knew her a little; she used often to join us in our rides, because we never rode in the parks, but out to Hampstead or Streat-ham. She rode beautifully, and was a fine intelligent girl, but very odd. She never appeared at her mother's evenings, because she did not choose to exert herself among the guests; and you know, in a limited party, it is *de rigueur* to speak to people a little. But *en revanche* she went always to the opera. It was there Colonel Mordaunt made her acquaintance."

“ With her mother ? ”

“ Oh ! she was not particular. Sometimes with Lady Hardwicke, sometimes with Harriet. I have seen her kneeling in the very front of the box, with her chin on the cushion, when Malibran has been playing Fidelio : and in the prison scene she would sob without restraint. People used to be astonished at her. But Colonel Mordaunt was so much in love, you never saw anything like it. Now, they say, he does not care about her.”

“ Is that common, Lucy ? ”

“ Oh ! very common, I believe. Though I must say Harriet and Sir Geoffrey are still very much attached. But then their children must be such a bond. Isabel Mordaunt has no children. But I really hope all this time, my dear Anne, it was merely a chance question of yours about Mr. Hardwicke, and that you did not much care about the reply.”

There had been time for Anne to regain her composure, at least outwardly.

“Quite so,” she replied, tranquilly; “we all thought Mr. Hardwicke so well-bred and so steady when we met him at Parkindale, that I was curious to learn what Mr. Clavering had to say against him.”

“Do you know he dines here to-day,—that admirer of yours?” asked Lady Lucy.

“Oh, yes! I heard Lady Orrington beg Lord Robert to invite him,” said Anne, dejectedly.

“Robert says he has a good deal of sense,” said Lucy.

“My dear Lucy, you need not tell me Lord Robert is satirical,” said Anne, forcing a smile.

“Oh, dear! there is Orrington going down to the lake to fish by himself, and he is so very absent,” said Lucy; “if you will excuse me, my dear Anne, I will go and speak to him.”

“Pray do!” said Anne. She was glad to be alone. To lean her head against the trel-

liced side of the summer-house, and think. So this was the person to whom she had given her hand—whom she had loved—for whom she had braved her parents—a sot, a spend-thrift, a profligate; in three years' time he had altered to this. Well, and so had Frank Morton; his mother's letters never breathed a word of it, but Mrs. Scawen had heard from other sources that she was worn with anxiety, and almost impoverished by her son's selfish extravagance. She could have disbelieved a mere report, but here were facts. Lord William could have no motive for misrepresenting Mr. Hardwicke's conduct to his sister. Grief and scorn contended for the mastery in her heart; which ached and throbbed, as if it would burst in the struggle. For he might come and claim her as his property—his wife: he might tell all his friends her secret, and laugh at the ease with which he had obtained her hand. There was nothing too dreadful to expect from such a

person. Still she had one ray of hope, which, in all her troubles, never deserted her. Hugh would protect her, he would give her shelter, she had formerly looked to him to bring them together—now her trust was that he would keep them apart. “For she would die (a favourite idea of hers, as if people could die when they would),—she would die rather than ever suffer him to touch her hand again!” Meanwhile her eyes mechanically followed Lucy’s graceful figure, as she glided down the pathway to meet her brother.

“What, Orrington,” she said, when she reached him; “are you going alone in that boat?”

“Yes, my dear,” said Lord Orrington, looking up from undoing the chain; “Bob is at his books.”

“I do not like it, if you mean to sail,” said Lady Lucy; “you will forget where you are, and something may happen.”

“Well, then,” said Lord Orrington, taking

hold of her chin, as if she was a child ; “ come and take care of me.”

“ But I am with Miss Scawen in the summer-house,” said Lucy.

“ Suppose I come into the summer-house,” said Lord Orrington.

“ Do,” replied Lucy.

Now, under any circumstances, Lord Orrington was a person not likely to interest Anne. He had achieved no name in public life, he had obtained no distinction in society. His very merits, had she known them, would have appeared to her quite prosaic and common ; that he had portioned his sisters, and advanced his brothers, and done all that his father had left undone, Anne would have thought very natural and inevitable. All that had ever crossed her mind about him was, that he was dreadfully deaf, and it was a pity he did not carry a long india-rubber tube coiled round his arm like a serpent, such as poor old Mr. Legerton wore.

So, when Lucy brought him in, Anne abstractedly moved her worsteds and silks, which had been strewed all over the seat, into smaller compass. Lord Orrington apologised and sat down—took off his hat—rested his folded hands on the table, and looked straight across into the lake. The young ladies went on with their work ; merely exchanging remarks about shades of wool, or petitions for pins and scissors.

“That water wants cleaning,” said Lord Orrington.

“It does indeed ; I wish you would talk it over with Morley,” said Lucy.

Lord Orrington nodded.

“We were talking about Mr. Hardwicke,” said Lucy ; “you know the Hardwickes, Sir Geoffrey’s neighbours.”

Anne thought she could not bear this—to hear it all talked over by a third person. She clenched her fingers in the trellis, and listened in silence.

“Ah !” said Lord Orrington.

“Is that the eldest son in William’s regiment ?” asked Lucy.

“No, the eldest son is not in the army,” said Lord Orrington, “You remember him, Lucy,—Charles Hardwicke—he rode in that steeple-chase at C——, and staked his horse, last Christmas—Jack was with us.”

“Oh ! I remember—horrible !” said Lucy.

“I wonder how they live, those Hardwicke’s,” said Lord Orrington, “over head and ears in debt.”

“What a miserable existence !” said Lucy.

“People get used to it,” remarked Lord Orrington.

“It is a very bad sign when they do,” said Lucy.

“Here comes Bob,” said Lord Orrington ; and as he was sitting next to Anne he got up, and stood in the entrance, as if to leave his seat vacant. Lord Robert took it directly.

“I hope Miss Scawen that you are prepared

to praise me infinitely," he began; "I do not suppose you ever saw filial devotion carried to a greater extent. I have been reading Vivian Grey all the morning, to satisfy my mother; her ambition is now appeased, and I am here."

"I am sure Anne will not praise you for that," said Lucy, "she is far too honest."

"Do you not admire Vivian Grey, then?" asked Lord Robert, with a look of surprise.

"That is not logical," said Anne, her spirits rising with a sense of relief that they had got away from the Hardwicke subject; "the question is rather, whether you ought to substitute a novel for a book of problems."

"The exchange is a very good one," said Lord Robert; "but you can argue, Miss Scawen—will you allow me to tell you that it is a fault? It is so very easy to divert most women from the case in point—to silence them, or to bewilder their ideas; but when

they read through you, it is very unpleasant ; we are disarmed at once."

" I cannot help it," said Anne.

" Anne is going to sketch the island," said Lucy.

" What, from this point ! " exclaimed Lord Robert. " Do you not think, Miss Scawen, it is better a little farther down, near the cedars, let me show you where I mean—you will then see the old clock-house, and surely you want some building in a sketch—nothing but green trees must be a great objection."

Anne walked off with Lord Robert, and Lord Orrington remarked to Lucy with great *naïveté*,—" That is a beautiful girl, my dear ; she strikes me more than at first—but very dull and silent, is she not ? she never speaks to me as other young ladies do, though, to be sure, I can seldom hear what they say."

" She does not wish to trepan you as the other young ladies do," said Lucy, laughing,

and taking her brother's arm. "There is the dressing bell, we must all go in."

There were not many people at dinner. Henry Scawen was as attentive as possible to Lady Lucy. Anne employed herself the whole evening in sliding out of Mr. Clavering's way, much to her friend Lucy's amusement. Lord Robert seconded her intentions; for partly with a wish to mystify his mother, he attached himself to Anne like her shadow. They looked over prints, they talked, they laughed, they played at *écarté*. Lady Orrington, after sighing a little, began to add up what Robert would have, and what Anne was likely to have, to see if it would do; but even then it struck her that it must be a long engagement, and she disapproved of long engagements. She went up to Lord Orrington.

"My dear Mote," she said, "you were right, Bob is making a fool of himself, I wish you would interrupt their *tête-à-tête*."

They were playing for pralines which Lucy

had given them out of a *bonbonnière* she kept for Lady Harriet's children. Anne was winning fast.

"Miss Scawen, Lady Orrington has sent me to beg that you will sing," said Lord Orrington.

"Oh! with pleasure; but I hold such good cards—Lucy will you win for me?" she said, rising.

"I lose at cards," said Lucy, taking them from her.

"Farewell to my pralines, then," said Anne, looking over her shoulder. "Lord Orrington, you are doing me a great deal of mischief."

"I am very sorry for it," said Lord Orrington, leading her to the piano.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Clavering, darting quite up to the music desk, "I have been dodging you about all the evening, and you pretended not to see me—now we can talk."

"Not very easily, as I am about to sing," said Anne, coldly, searching in her portfolio.

“What will you sing?” he asked, sitting down on one of the music stools.

“I mean to accompany myself; we are not going to play a duet—you must not sit there,” said Anne, selecting a song.

“The ‘Inchcape Bell!’” said Mr. Clavering, rising and standing beside her. “When old D—— dies, I shall be Lord Inchcape.”

Anne threw the song aside.

“What is the meaning of that?” he asked, angrily.

“I do not wish to sing about your stupid name,” said Anne, colouring.

“What is the harm of it?” he asked, replacing the song on the stand.

Anne quietly began to play the symphony of a German song that she knew by heart.

Mr. Clavering stamped with rage.

Anne’s singing was generally admired; every one entreated her to sing again; but she resigned her seat to Lady Lucy, and went to look after her pralines.

“ You have not one left, Miss Scawen,” said Lord Robert, triumphantly. “ Lucy has such luck — now, I am sure you would always win. What is the proverb ?—Mote, do you know it—about winning at cards ?”

“ I can tell you,” said Henry Scawen : “ those ladies who win at cards will have bad husbands, and *vice versâ* ;” and he looked maliciously at Anne, who turned as pale as death.

“ The heavens forbend !” exclaimed Lord Robert, with a laugh.

“ The time is gone by for omens,” said Lucy ; “ but I think the way to make sure of a good husband is (to use an Irish freedom of speech) to take none at all.”

“ So I think,” said Anne, shuddering.

“ Why, here ’s a mutiny in the camp !” exclaimed Lord Robert, still laughing. “ Is there no one present who can convince these ladies of their mistake ?”

Henry whispered a few words to Lady

Lucy. She blushed a little, but did not turn away.

“Come, never you mind about husbands,” said Mr. Clavering, drawing nearer to Anne, who was seated at the card-table. “I want to speak to you. Now, when are you coming home?”

“When Lady Orrington is quite tired of me, and turns me out,” said Anne, steadily.

“Oh! but that’s all very fine; I want you to fix a day.”

“I cannot do that, Mr. Clavering.”

“You mean you won’t.”

Anne went on shuffling the cards she had taken up, without making any answer.

“Will you come Thursday—will you come Saturday—will you come to-night? there’s room in the phaeton.”

Anne looked up with a scornful smile.

“Henry, come here and make your sister fix when she comes back; it’s too bad!” grumbled Mr. Clavering.

Anne fixed her great dazzling eyes on her brother : he was bending over Lady Lucy's chair.

“ What is all this about ? ” asked Lady Orington, coming up to the table. “ Anne Seawen going home ; don't flatter yourself, young gentleman ! If you wish for her company you may come here for it ! She came to me for a week, and I shall think her very shabby if she does not give us a few days over. And, Mr. Henry, if you do not take my part, I hardly know what I shall say to you ! ”

Mr. Henry had not the least inclination to gratify Anne by his decision, but he had every desire to forward his own plans. While Anne was staying at Sherwood it was easier for him to seek the society of Lady Lucy. He had already managed to include himself in the sketching party for the next day.

“ My dear fellow,” he said, taking Mr.

Clavering's arm, "you see I am under orders. It is time for us to wish her ladyship good night. And really, judging by my own feelings, I should consider it a barbarous act to shorten any one's stay at Sherwood!"

CHAPTER VI.

I have wished
That even the worst were come, I am so sick
And weary with suspense.

MILMAN.

ANNE was allowed to remain a week at Sherwood. Then her father insisted on her return. Lucy pleaded hard for a few days more; but Mr. Scawen was inexorable. He told Lady Orrington fairly, that the Claverings had come with no other object than to conclude a matrimonial engagement with his daughter, and that it would not be considerate to them if she were longer absent.

Lady Orrington was too keenly sensible of the blessing of a good match, to throw any hindrance in the way.

“ I shall not press her to stay a minute beyond the time fixed, on any account, my dear,” she said to Lady Lucy, “ and who knows? it may chance that you see a good deal of each other, by and bye—suppose, for instance, you were to become connexions.”

Lucy blushed—she did that easily—for she knew that her mother alluded to Henry Scawen.

But though he had redoubled his attentions, Lucy had by this time made up her mind. She saw, as Anne had trusted she would, that he was inferior. Coarse people soon do or say something that jars upon high-toned natures. You may safely leave them alone for that. He had, as yet, made her no offer, and she saw well that he did not love her; but the alliance would have flattered his pride—and his birth and prospects would have rendered him no bad match, even for Lord Orrington’s daughter. But Lucy did not intend to lower herself to his worser nature.

Other women would have accepted him, if they could find no better suitor—it is the way of the world; but Lucy thought that every one should try to be better than the world, lest they should end by becoming worse.

As soon as Lady Orrington found that there was a positive arrangement on foot with Mr. Clavering, she gave up the idea of trying to exchange him for Lord Orrington.

“After all,” she said, “Mote takes no notice of the girl; and as for Bob, if he chooses to behave like a great moth, and buzz about the candle, it is his own fault. He may burn his fingers if he likes it—he is old enough to take care of himself.”

As for Lord Robert, he admired Anne intensely—more than he had ever admired any person, or any picture, or any horse in his life. She could not move or speak without his watching her with a delight and an admiration that kindled up his face like a

lamp. He was *half* in love, as you often see men in the present day. There was no such thing a century back. He often thought if he were rich and idle, he would make her an offer directly. But he never thought that for her sake he would *become* rich, and that after all his toil he could obtain no recompense greater than her love. On the contrary, he thought more of his future career than he did of Anne—though he followed her about the house and grounds, and never, if he could help it, would suffer any one to address her but himself. And how he amused her! She took the greatest delight in his conversation. His powers first taught her the excitement there is in intelligent discourse. The talk of society is sadly tame after it. He had read so much—and he was always ready with a quotation or an anecdote. Curious things in history—quaint scraps of poetry—and odd thoughts of his own—all came out in turn.

She thought him (so he was) the very

cleverest person she had ever seen—but there was nothing in his disposition that harmonised with hers; and had she passed a year instead of a week in the house with him, he would have left no impression on her feelings.

She had been very happy at Sherwood—“grievously happy,” as she said to Lucy, thinking of the home to which she was returning. She loved Lucy more every hour. Her extreme gentleness and the fine evenness of her temper were so excessively soothing to Anne’s more impetuous nature.

Then she thoroughly liked the homely kindness of Lady Orrington — her good-natured anxiety for her comfort and amusement, and the cordial terms on which she stood with her children—she was always a welcome addition to their group, rubbing her eyeglass and dropping out her blunt remarks.

She liked Lord Orrington, too, with his stately bearing, and the extreme simplicity of his disposition. There was something

pleasing in the contrast. She liked him very well to join their walks, or their party in the boat, though he rarely spoke, except to Lucy, whose voice he could always hear. Yet, when they fished, he was very kind to Anne, baiting her hook, and giving her advice where to cast her line.

The last evening of her stay, they were all walking on the terrace, after dinner, by the light of the August moon. The air, all steeped with the dewy fragrance of jessamine and clematis, and the cordial scent of the cedar-bark: the ladies, wrapped in shawls, but without their bonnets, and the spiritual moonlight imparting that softened charm to the face and eyes, that perhaps lovers may sometimes notice. Only there were no lovers to notice it on that occasion.

Anne clung to Lucy with a helpless feeling of dread. Sometimes her spirits went down altogether. She thought of Mr. Hardwicke with terror; of Mr. Clavering with aversion.

She felt that an unquiet time was before her, and that when she went home the strife would begin. And this week's calm had been so sweet, that she shrank with a languid feeling she had never known before, from the scenes of discord that she anticipated.

"Robert, come and tell us something; we are not in spirits," said Lucy, who had made some fruitless attempts to engage Anne in conversation.

"Spirits! and who is in spirits, I wonder? do you suppose *I* am?" asked Lord Robert, coming up to his sister. "Do you think I have no more feeling than that sun-dial? Miss Scawen, I am very low; as Orrington's valet said, when his sweetheart was transported for shop-lifting."

"I hope not from the same cause," said Anne, smiling.

"Why, not exactly. And, what is it you want, Lucy? Poetry, I suppose. Look at the moon hanging over the lake, between those

two black cedars. Find me words to depict that silver pathway. People accuse poets of be-rhyming the moon. I think she is rather neglected. Except a few lines in Shakspeare, and that awfully well known passage in Milton, I do not know anything much to her praise ? ”

“ Think of a fine moonlight from Byron,” said Lucy to Anne. “ He takes one at a disadvantage.”

“ Sunrise is more manageable,” continued Lord Robert. “ Spenser revels in them ; steeping his dawns in such gorgeous and chameleon-colours, that one is almost tempted to get up some fine morning, and see whether there is any truth in them ; a circumstance of which I am at present ignorant, since they are scenes I don’t affect, and never saw. But Spenser does not meddle with the moon.”

“ Oh ! Robert, if you recollect ” —

“ I mean, not to count — not to signify ; you are so literal, you Wordsworthians. I

don't mean to say he never mentions her majesty. This is such a literal age. In works of art, now, how common people love what is literal! Go into a gallery of pictures. A knot of common souls round a Titian, will presently find out that the face is like Jem Brown or Mary Smith: and all that concerns them is, that the portrait has Jem's nose, but the eyes are darker, and the mouth not like at all. I believe then they begin to think Titian a clumsy fellow."

"Oh! Robert" —

"No, my dear; I don't know any of Wordsworth — except a little verse about 'a party in a parlour,' and that has a bad word in it, and is unfit for young ladies. Chaucer is my favourite."

"I thought *he* was unfit for all ladies," said Lucy.

Lord Robert began to repeat—

" 'The plowman pluckid up his plowe
When Midsomer mone was comen in,

And saied his bestes should ete inowe
And lige in grasse up to the chin.
Thei ben feble both oxe and ewe
Of 'hem n' is left but bone and skinne,
He shoke off shere, and coulter off drowe,
And honged his hernis on a pinne.'

“ Match me that, Lucy, for a pastoral sketch.”

“ Only, I think, my dear Robert, you should not complain of *literal* poetry after that,” said Lady Lucy.

“ The Greek poets knew their art, *as art*, better than ours,” said Lord Robert, ‘who sometimes would ramble on, without attending to his sister’s remarks. “ They seldom describe Nature for itself. They know that moonlight cannot be transfused into words; nor the ripple on the ocean; nor the thousand beautiful times and scenes that our poets are always trying their hands upon. But the whole range of human passion and emotion, that is made for words — in that magic they deal; and only bring in Na-

ture as connected with the feeling of the moment."

"How I like the little fable of the grasshopper," said Lucy.

"Ah! Apollonidas," said Lord Robert, beginning to repeat the translation—

" ' High on a lofty thicket,
Which soon the sun perceives,
Where branch with branch intwisting
A couch of foliage weaves.' "

"By the way, Lucy, I suppose that may have been the origin of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, eh? is not that a discovery? Crito, the bird-catcher—

' In that he slew the grasshopper
He never throve again.' "

"Does not that resemble the other man?

' I shot the albatross! ' "

"I will not own it," said Lady Lucy; "I dislike that habit of prying into the origin of fine poems, and finding out that the author has not invented *all*, not quite created his work—it looks envious."

“ Well, my dear, man is envious,” said Lord Robert ; “ it is a melancholy fact—it is a pleasure to find a flaw in a great work ; though why we should fancy ourselves any the nearer to greatness on that account, I cannot see—on the contrary.”

Anne heard them talking, almost as in a dream. It diverted her in a measure from her own thoughts, though she could hardly follow the subject of their discourse. She was sorry when the butler, appearing on the top of the flight of steps leading from the library window, announced to Lady Orrington that coffee was in the drawing-room.

“ Well, my dear,” said Lady Orrington, as they were drinking tea round the table, “ I hope with all my heart before this time next year that you and Lucy will be married ; young ladies have really no business to be single. Never tell me that they cannot help themselves, I know better. I need not say, my dear Anne, how much I con-

gratulate you. And Lord D— is a very sickly man.”

Anne shivered, and went on nervously drinking her tea. Lord Robert feeling very angry, and not knowing how to show it, began to laugh.

“What a farce it is,” he said, “to see how we jostle one another on the steps of Fortune’s ladder. Lord D— a very sickly man.”

“Well, and so he is, Bob,” said Lady Orrington, rubbing her glasses. “I don’t see what you find to laugh at !”

“Do you, Miss Scawen ?” asked Lord Robert.

Anne was much more disposed to cry. Ashamed to give way before them all, she sat struggling with her tears, until Lady Lucy charitably made the move to ring for tapers, declaring that she and Anne had been walking about all the day, and were quite tired out.

Anne made up her mind how to act during her miserable drive home the next day—for

dreary it seemed, though the sun was blazing overhead, and the stately trees, and thick hedgerows standing in broad masses of light and shade, and the brook flashing through the hawthorns, and the fish-ponds shining like glass. She settled that it was time enough to make herself uneasy when Mr. Clavering's attentions became more marked — for she supposed he would hardly make her an offer without something a little more of courtship than had as yet characterised his manner; and when he did offer, and was decidedly refused, then her father would of course be very deeply offended, and she must bear it as well as she could. The case was very simple.

Mr. Clavering was watching for her arrival, and smoking a cigar to pass the time. This was the only trace remaining of his military career. Anne happened to detest the smell of tobacco, as fervently as Charles the First, or Marie Antoinette. She paused on the step of the carriage when it drew up before the door.

“Be so good as to move off to a distance before I get down,” she said, waving her hand as he offered his to help her out, “you are smoking, I cannot bear the scent.”

He threw away his cigar, but she passed him quickly, holding her handkerchief to her face.

CHAPTER VII.

Ch. Sir, there are mysteries in Love that cannot
Be dealt with or by treaties or by laws :
You can provide for all things but the strange
Religious sympathy that sets on wedlock,
The seal of Heaven, the sanction of the Heart.

ANON.

Cap. But an you will not wed, I'll pardon you !
Graze where you will, you shall not house with me :
Look to 't, think on 't ; I do not use to jest.

Romeo and Juliet.

ANNE carried out her plan of repelling Mr. Clavering's attentions as much as lay in her power, but she had no means of avoiding his society. She was expected to be in the drawing-room at certain hours ; and he was never easy during her absence ; in this particular, as in all others, resembling exactly the Mr. Clavering she had known three years

ago. Whenever she tried to excuse herself from the riding and driving parties, Mrs. Scawen took care to oppose her intentions; and as she could not explain her motives to her mother-in-law, and if she had, it would have been quite useless, she found herself included in every scheme of amusement in which Mr. Clavering chose to join. It was not deemed at all necessary at this stage of the proceedings to acquaint her with the honour intended her; and as to making a regular offer, that was an exertion of which he felt himself quite incapable. It was he who accidentally enlightened her one morning, however, by saying in reference to some remark she made about her piano,—

“Ah! when we take a house, I’ll get you one of Erard’s piano’s, they are better than Broadwood’s, after all.”

He was sitting by the table scraping a bit of wood, and Anne had been practising a prelude. She certainly had not the least idea

that he could suppose himself secure of her hand, without having at all sounded her views on the subject. She left the piano, and came up to his table.

“We take a house? are you dreaming?” she asked.

“When we take a house,” said Mr. Clavering, looking up. “I suppose we are not to live in the street or under a hedge, are we?”

“I wonder whether he is in his right mind,” said Anne, sitting down and beginning to work.

“Do you mean to say you don’t know what our governors are about?” said Mr. Clavering, still scraping diligently at his bit of wood.

“Not I, indeed,” said Anne; “they were talking about letting farms at breakfast. I did not pay attention, because it was a subject that did not amuse me.”

“Whose farms?” asked Mr. Clavering.

“ Papa’s farms, of course,” replied Anne.

“ Don’t you know Westgate is a part of your marriage portion, as it is not entailed ?” asked Mr. Clavering. “ Did not your grandmother, or your godmother, or somebody, make it over to you ? ”

It really occurred to her, his manner was so wooden, and his countenance so stolid, that he could not be the person after all.

“ When I marry—but what talk is there of my marriage ? Have you heard papa say anything ? It can’t be—I do not know a single creature except the Sherwoods—and Lord Robert is not—. Why do you not speak, Mr. Clavering ? If you know of any plot against me, it is very unkind not to tell me of it.”

Anne had risen, and, leaning her hands on the table, was looking earnestly in his face. A sort of smile struggled over his wooden features, but he remained silent.

“ I did not think,” said Anne, indignantly,

“that you had grown so ill-natured as to withhold from me anything I desired to know. You are not half so pleasant, Mr. Clavering, as you used to be.”

“So much the worse for you !” retorted Mr. Clavering, growing angry at this unflattering speech.

“For me? what can you mean? Do you think I concern myself whether you are pleasant or not? Why, you can’t be pleasant if you would ! You do not mean,” said Anne, attempting to decipher the singular expression of his face ; “you cannot mean that papa thinks of you and me together?”

“Why not?” asked Mr. Clavering, looking up with an air of defiance.

“Because he knows very well it could never be,” said Anne, trying to speak with composure, and walking slowly towards the window.

“He knows that, does he?” exclaimed Mr. Clavering, rising, and cautiously laying

on the table all the odds and ends he had been treasuring in his handkerchief. "Now, I'll tell you what *I* know: you see if it is not all settled and over before Michaelmas!"

As he spoke he followed Anne to the window.

"Ah! you may look frightened," he added, perceiving the expression of terror that blanched her face and dilated her eyes; "everybody's mind is made up—so there!"

"Not mine!" returned Anne, surveying him with her haughtiest glance; "and perhaps it would have been worth while to have ascertained that in the first instance!"

"Tell Mr. Scawen so," returned Mr. Clavering; "and see if that will make any difference!"

"Coward!" exclaimed Anne, her whole face beaming with indignation.

Mr. Clavering began to sing the legend of St. Thomas.

"If it is true—if you knew what they

were planning, and never warned me — do you not see that you have been acting a very treacherous part?" asked Anne, trembling with agitation.

"Not a bit; I had no objection; I wished it," replied Mr. Clavering, calmly.

"And what were your wishes, pray, unless mine were consulted!" exclaimed Anne; "and then to see the meanness: *you* could get out of it, if you pleased, but you know how difficult it would be for me to oppose papa."

"So difficult that I would not advise you to try it," replied Mr. Clavering, coolly nibbling a slender bit of wood, and swinging his foot as he sat on the window-seat.

Anne tried to command herself, but she succeeded only in speaking a little more slowly.

"Listen," she said; "it perhaps may appear ridiculous to refuse a man who has never thought it worth while to make me an offer."

Mr. Clavinger nodded his entire acquiescence in this observation.

“ You might have had the courtesy to give me the option ; you ought to be a gentleman ; you, with the blood of the Plantagenets in your veins ; but as you are *not*, as you coolly insult me by telling me that my marriage with you is arranged, I tell you as coolly that it shall not take place. You may arrange with your father, and withdraw quietly at once, or you may remain here planning and settling everything to the last, and so make your defeat the more absurd and public — do which you like ; it is absolutely the same to me ; it will not alter my conduct and my resolve by a hair’s breadth, — so take your choice ! ”

He fixed his hard eyes upon her very earnestly while she spoke, and then, having previously got through half his ballad, he favoured her with the remainder of that exemplary saint’s adventures.

Anne walked about the room in a tumult of feeling.

“If I could but let him understand that he makes me miserable,” she thought; “he used to have some good feeling; he surely cannot persist in his intentions. But he makes me so angry that I hardly know how to address him.”

“And so,” remarked Mr. Clavering, as if it were a sequel to his last observation, “I have done nothing in it; my governor brought me here on purpose; but they have been settling all the money matters without me; I am sure I’ve had no hand in it: you need not be in such a rage.”

“You distress me, Mr. Clavering,” said Anne; “it is past a jest; you must break off this as soon as possible; it has gone too far already, but it was in ignorance on my part; I thought nothing was planned, or would be planned, until you had spoken to me. And, therefore, you will be so good as to inform the General.”

"I!—*le plus souvent!*" retorted Mr. Clavering. "Why, all along I meant to marry you. That is what made me so savage with that fellow Hardwicke!"

"It cannot be, Mr. Clavering!" said Anne, decidedly: "when I tell you that it would make me wretched, you ought to feel that it is impossible for you to persist in it."

"See if I don't; why, I came here on purpose," said Mr. Clavering, stubbornly.

"You cannot wish to marry a woman who has no regard for you!" exclaimed Anne; "you surely have too much respect for yourself to offer your hand to a person who cannot feel the least affection for you in return."

"Never you mind," retorted Mr. Clavering, still swinging his foot.

Anne felt a great inclination to sit down and cry, but she thought it would be wiser to go on attempting to convince her singular lover.

"Do you remember," she said, "when you were staying here before, I had my own way

in everything, and even when you tried to oppose me, it was of no use ? ”

“ Ah ! but I ’m older now,” said Mr. Clavering, with a look of satisfaction.

“ And so am I older,” replied Anne, firmly.

The control of a strong mind over a weaker was beginning to work. Mr. Clavering looked uncomfortable, and after a nervous pause, he began a very incoherent defence of his conduct.

“ When everybody knows that old D— has had a paralytic stroke, and can’t last for ever, and is as rich as a Jew. I am sure other girls would not be in a rage with me. I ’ve done nothing,—I have not made love to you. I ’ve said as little as anybody could. I think you the handsomest girl in the world. If I were a duke I should think the same. I am not a bad match, but I wish I were a better. Whatever I had I should be glad to share with you. You would lead a very easy life. Then you should have your own way again. I ’m not worse than other people ; not so bad as

many. You liked me well enough before I let out that you were to marry me; and if you want a handsome man, why, I wish you joy of your bargain before you have been married six months."

This address, rendered rather indistinct by his chewing the bit of wood all the time, failed to convince Anne of the treasure she was throwing away.

"I have said everything that can be said," she replied; "if you had a spark of good sense or good feeling you would see what to do. I am not going to intreat or implore—let it be a trial of strength between us. I am not defenceless, not quite alone as you think. I have a brother who will take my part."

"Ah! that everlasting Hugh," said Mr. Clavering; "but he wont be here till it is all settled, thank goodness!"

At this crisis the peace-making Mrs. Scawen entered the room.

"I say, Mrs. Scawen," said Mr. Clavering,

who had grown very red as usual at the mention of Hugh, "here is Anne saying she will not have me."

"Have you been asking her?" inquired Mrs. Scawen, with her false smile.

"No," said Mr. Clavering, hesitating.

"Then I think Anne was rather premature in her rejection," remarked her step-mother.

"Do you hear that?" asked Mr. Clavering.

Anne, her eyes flashing, turned away in silent disdain.

"Not but what I mean to marry her all the same," observed Mr. Clavering

"As you have broken the ice in mentioning the subject, I may be allowed to say how much pleasure I feel in the prospect," said Mrs. Scawen, with the same detestable smile.

Anne's lips moved as if she were about to retort, but she restrained herself, and stood looking out of the window, and pressing her hand upon her heart. Mr. Clavering was so delighted by Mrs. Scawen's polite speech, that

he went up to Anne and said suddenly, with a good-humoured air—

“ Shake hands.”

“ I will never shake hands with you again,” said Anne, looking at him steadily.

“ I think, Miss Scawen, said her step-mother, it will be well for you to remember that your father will not permit these ebullitions of passion; you will do wisely to restrain your temper.”

Anne made her no answer. She stood a moment irresolute, and then turned and left the room.

She had made the plunge—she was breathless with agitation, and stood a minute in the hall to recover herself and collect her thoughts. Things must be far advanced, indeed, if they were planning her marriage portion. It was time to act; she could gain nothing by delay. She had better go at once to her father.

Trembling in every limb she crossed the hall, and opened his study door. He was

not there ; and she felt grateful for the respite. She put on her bonnet and shawl, and went out to walk up and down the terrace, in front of the house, waiting for him. When she saw him coming up the avenue in company with General Clavering, her heart failed her altogether, and she went back into the hall, half resolving to put off the interview to another time.

Yet—she thought, this cowardly delay is of no use ; I must recollect that I have no alternative—my hand is not my own—if I were weakly to put off my explanation, the marriage would draw nearer and nearer, and, perhaps, take place—and then I should commit a legal crime—I should be a felon.

Her hands became cold—she stood shivering for a minute, and then quickly entered the study, and stood by the table expecting her father's entrance.

Perhaps she waited three minutes, her heart beating all the time louder than the clock on the staircase.

“ Why, Anne, you here !” said Mr. Scawen, as he came in. “ Do you want me ?”

“ Yes, sir, I do. I very much desire to speak to you,” said Anne.

She had never found before that it is somewhat difficult at times to speak plainly. She could hardly articulate.

“ Well,” said Mr. Scawen, putting his hat on the table, and seating himself in his arm-chair.

She had not expected an encouraging manner, and, therefore, it was not necessary that her heart should fall as it did, at that monosyllable.

“ Papa, I find,” she began. “ I am quite surprised to find,”—

“ Well, what now ?” asked Mr. Scawen.

“ I did not know before, but I learn to-day, that Mr. Clavering designs to offer me his hand,” said she, trembling more and more.

“ You did not know it ?” said Mr. Scawen, looking very much displeased. “ Do not tell

me that you were not perfectly aware of his addresses !”

“ I did suspect, sir,” said Anne, “ but there was nothing conclusive enough in his manner to justify me in rejecting his attentions ; indeed, he scarcely offered any.”

“ And I suppose you would hardly have presumed to reject attentions sanctioned by your parents, without communicating to them on the subject,” said Mr. Scawen.

“ Yes, sir, in that particular I should have thought fit to act for myself ;” said Anne, gathering a nervous sort of courage as she proceeded.

“ With regard to *attentions*, Mr. Clavering has acted with great delicacy in not making them too apparent,” said Mr. Scawen. “ I suppose you have no idea of wishing to be *courted*, as if you were a maid-servant. Mr. Clavering will, one day, be the Earl of D——. I believe I have mentioned that fact to you before. His father is now possessed of a hand-

some fortune, besides great expectations ; and means to act very liberally towards his son. You will not wonder, therefore, that I have gladly accepted his overtures of marriage in your behalf. I should have considered myself failing in an important duty if I had neglected such an opportunity of establishing my daughter. I have to tell you that you will not go altogether empty-handed to the house of Clavering ; and, in time, when you know more of the world, you will become increasingly sensible of your singular good fortune in being selected by such a man."

Some people fancy that genuine emotion is sure of convincing and touching others ; this is far from the case. Persons under the influence of strong feelings seldom say the right thing : they grow nervous or angry, and generally commit some blunder that loses them their cause.

" Surely, sir, you cannot think highly of Mr. Clavering ! You cannot believe that I

could return the preference of such a man!" exclaimed Anne, too frightened to control her voice. "I have a contempt for him!—he is weak in his intellects!—I believe, indeed, he is an idiot, sir."

"And, how dare you have recourse to such abusive epithets?" cried Mr. Scawen, striking his clenched hand on his desk; "let me never hear you make use of such a term again! An idiot!—I blush for your want of self-command."

On she went, making matters worse at every step.

"I never feigned, sir—I never pretended to like him—I always tried to avoid his society, but I have been forced into it lately."

"Forced! I think you are losing your reason! your father's guests are entitled to your civility. Until you renewed your acquaintance with the Sherwoods you were very well pleased with Mr. Clavering; and you

may remember I warned you not to think of Lord Robert. But it makes no difference—I have arranged the affair—it is your part to submit.”

“Indeed, sir, I assure you, I have not the slightest regard for Lord Robert; but I have a positive horror of Mr. Clavering. I consider him a maniac!”

“Again!” cried Mr. Scawen, “how dare you utter such a word! And what well-bred woman would indulge a feeling of ‘horror’ towards a gentleman of high birth selected by her parents as her suitor? You have been reading plays and poems till you have disordered your imagination. You must not suppose that in marriage you have nothing to do but to please your eye.”

“Sir, it is impossible for my feelings towards Mr. Clavering to undergo a change,” said Anne, now on the verge of tears. “I cannot, if I adhere to truth, use terms too strong to express the dislike I entertain for

Mr. Clavering in the light of a suitor. I implore you to explain to the General my feelings on the subject, and beg him to withdraw his son from King's Cope."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," retorted Mr. Scawen. "I have always earnestly desired this connection; and now that it presents itself, I shall certainly oppose nothing to its fulfilment. You will offend me irretrievably, if you hesitate—even *hesitate* about the matter."

"It is not honest, sir," said Anne, losing her self-command from pure terror, without the slightest intention of being disrespectful. "It is not honest, indeed, to accept the hand of a man with such feelings as I entertain towards Mr. Clavering; and I cannot. You do not know how *utterly* it is out of my power to comply with your desire!"

"Have you any other attachment?" he exclaimed, hastily.

"None; indeed, none!" replied Anne, with truth; for Mr. Hardwicke's image had been

clouded in her mind, and she loved him no longer.

“Then what should hinder your acceding to my wishes?” he inquired.

He seemed trying to be calm.

“I cannot — I cannot!” she exclaimed, with the most heartfelt expression of distress.

“You *will* not!” thundered her father, starting from his chair.

“Well, then — I will not! I will not debase myself!” she exclaimed, hardly knowing, in her agitation, what she said. “Besides, I cannot: it is impossible; it is out of my power!”

“Do you know that you are dependant? — that you are my creature! — that I can compel you to obey me, or withdraw from you the means of subsistence? Do you think I will harbour a rebel in my house?” cried Mr. Scawen.

“You can never compel me to accept Mr.

Clavering !” replied Anne. “I had rather be cast forth from your house ! I had rather die ! I should be choosing between death and dishonour !”

“ Will you yield ? Will you obey ? ” exclaimed her father, frantic with rage.

“ Never, never, never ! ” cried Anne, agitated beyond all control of voice and gesture.

“ Choose ! ” he shouted ; and he flung open the door of his study.

Anne rushed out.

She fled from the house, and along the avenue, like a hunted deer ; but when she came to the lodge gates, she paused to consider.

Datchley ! That was the only word in her thoughts. But Datchley was in Buckinghamshire.

CHAPTER VIII.

Imo. A father cruel and a step-dame false,
A foolish suitor to a wedded lady
That hath her husband banished.

Cymbeline

Mrs. F. Oh ! my heart—my heart !

Was ever woman thus abused ? Oh that I could
Spit wildfire ! *A Woman never vex.*

MR. SCAWEN remained for some time alone, musing over this unsatisfactory interview. Although Anne had taken too high a tone, and had, therefore, naturally laid herself open to his censure, he was not quite contented with the part he had himself played in the contest. He began to doubt whether it was quite consistent with his duty to insist on her fulfilling an engagement which she contemplated with such absolute horror.

A little fastidiousness he would have felt himself justified in opposing, but this was too definite an abhorrence.

It was very awkward, because Mr. Clavering had retired from the army solely on account of this marriage, and no one had anticipated that there would be a moment's difficulty in obtaining Anne's consent. Young ladies, are seldom, to do them justice, very troublesome, when rank and fortune are in prospect.

He thought he would make one more trial to shake her resolution,—he would argue with her,—he would see what kindness would effect; and, if that method proved unavailing, it would be time to speak to the General, and bring this cherished prospect to so mortifying a conclusion. While he was thinking over these things, Mrs. Scawen came in, and begged to know if he had seen anything of Anne.

“Yes! She was with me half an hour ago,” he replied; “we had a disagreeable scene.

It appears to me that she is very much averse to this marriage. Did you know that before?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Scawen," said his wife. "I always thought Anne and Mr. Clavering the best friends in the world. I suppose she thinks it requisite to put on more than an ordinary share of coyness to enhance her consent. For she is not a girl to throw away such a splendid chance. She is very unruly and ambitious, her conduct at home proves that; she will be better settled in a house of her own."

"Well! I wish you would see her," said Mr. Scawen: "and say that I will talk the matter over with her again, when I hope we shall both be calmer."

"If you wish it," she replied; "but Anne is not in the house, her maid was inquiring of her just now, to fit on a *Berthé* she was to wear this evening. I had fancied she was gone to her room."

“Bless my heart!” cried Mr. Scawen, in sudden alarm. “Oh! I dare say she is in the grounds. She was a good deal excited, and, perhaps, thought a walk would do her good. Yes! I should not wonder that they would find her by the brook. Send Harris to call her back. She might, I hardly think she could, but she *might* have misunderstood some expressions I let fall. We were both warm, I told you.”

“I have no doubt, whatever, of *her* warmth, Mr. Scawen,” said the step-mother, as she left the room; “she is so headstrong that I only hope she may not have thrown herself into the water.”

This was a pleasant idea to be dropped into his mind. Something she had said which he had scarcely heeded at the time, some words she had dashed out with all the passion of despair, rang in his ears now: something about “choosing between death and dishonour.”

He hastened out into the park. It was

easy at any distance to detect a woman's figure in the landscape. The flutter of Anne's green cashmere and lilac silk dress, would have been visible among the rough hawthorns and dark elm bough far or near. He very soon made up his mind she was not there. The brook was too shallow. One of the fish-ponds was very deep, but that was within sight of the house, and its glittering surface was undisturbed; that was an idea too shocking to dwell upon. He wondered how Mrs. Scawen could hint at such a thing.

After wandering uneasily about for an hour, he returned to the house just as the dinner-bell was ringing.

Mrs Scawen came out of the drawing-room as she heard the hall door open. She was ready dressed and rouged.

"We have seen nothing of her," she said.

"Nor I," returned Mr. Scawen.

"What are we to think?" she asked.

"I am at a loss; where can she be gone?"

“Not to the Sherwood’s?”

“Hardly. Lady Orrington would never encourage—”

“But Lord Robert?” suggested Mrs. Scawen.

“The Sherwoods are so respectable; he would never elope with her!” said Mr. Scawen.

“I don’t know,” said Mrs. Scawen.

“Anne is certainly very handsome,” he said.

“So you tell me,” she replied, in a deprecating tone.

“And it is so plebeian to run away. No, he could not do it,” said Mr. Scawen.

“We should soon hear from Sherwood, if that were the case; but I do not think Lord Robert admired her,” said Mrs. Scawen.”

“Yes, he did!” retorted Mr. Scawen, who could never bear to be contradicted; “but it does not follow that he should be a black-guard!”

“Certainly not,” replied Mrs. Scawen.

“ Well, then, what are we to do ? ” he asked.

“ Shall we go to dinner ? ” she suggested.

“ Yes ! we must not let the Clavering’s know she is missing. What would they surmise ? ”

“ But had you not better first direct Harris to make some inquiries ? ”

“ Why, that would be so completely admitting him behind the scenes.”

“ Only, you know, Mr. Scawen, that if inquiries are to be acted upon, they should be set on foot directly.”

“ Well, then, I will speak to Harris, and join you in the drawing-room.”

The General and his son were waiting. Mr. Scawen apologised for his dress ; saying, that having been detained unexpectedly, he preferred sitting down to table as he was, to keeping them waiting.

The General made a courteous reply, and Mr. Clavering stared hard at him. He was not easily deceived ; for he had the habit of

watching people's faces, rather than their words.

"I say; where's Anne?" he asked, when the butler announced dinner.

"My daughter has a severe head-ache," said Mr. Scawen; "I hope she may be able to join us in the evening."

"No she has not!" said Mr. Clavering.

"My dear Wymond!" exclaimed the general.

"Well, I mean what I say," persisted Mr. Clavering; "I know her ways well enough — she won't come down to dinner, because she had a quarrel with me in the morning."

"Do you not think that would be likely to give her a head-ache?" said Mr. Scawen, trying to be jocose.

"More likely to give *me* a heart-ache," said Mr. Clavering.

This he meant literally, and not in a figurative sense, as he was liable to spasms

at the heart, if anything put him out of his way.

“ I really think, my dear Mrs. Scawen, that such a gallant speech might induce your fair daughter to pardon his offence ;” said the General, as he led Mrs. Scawen across the hall.

She gave a forced smile, and tried in vain to reply. She was subdued for once, for she really began to think that Anne had made away with herself; and though she would have been glad of it afterwards, yet she felt a physical kind of terror at the thought of seeing her body brought into the house.

Such a dinner party it was !—Even General Clavering found nothing to say. The servants looked gloomy, for it had been whispered in the lower regions that Miss Scawen was not to be found, and that there had been a blow-up of some sort between her and the Emperor, as they called Mr. Scawen.

Mr. Clavering was extremely sulky — he

would eat nothing, and sank irremediably in Mrs. Scawen's opinion by saying to her, as soon as the dessert was set on the table, "Now you had better go and look after Anne; if she *has* a head-ache, which I don't believe."

She took the hint and withdrew; and soon afterwards Mr. Scawen was sent for to meet Harris in his study. He had collected some tidings of Anne.

"Miss Scawen had been at the lodge about five o'clock,—the great entrance. Mrs. Gatland was there with her baby and eldest girl. Miss Scawen had sat with her perhaps half an hour, nursing her baby and talking. Once or twice she thought Miss Scawen was crying."

"And what did they talk about?"

Harris did not know—only Miss Scawen had sent the girl up to the house for her reticule—the morocco reticule with the gold lock and key. And she had given the girl a half sovereign. She had said "good bye,

Mrs. Gatland," solemnly, as the lodge woman thought, and had kissed the baby—but that Miss Scawen often did. She turned into the wilderness, and Mrs. Gatland thought she was going that way back to the house."

"And the gate?"

"The gate in the wall that led from the wilderness out on the high road was locked, but Miss Scawen had a key."

"She had a key? I did not know of it!"

"Master Hugh's key, sir," said Harris; "Miss Scawen mostly carried it about with her."

It was evident that Anne was gone—and alone; he did not suspect her of having eloped with a lover—but in what direction he could not guess, and it was not easy to inquire. The high road passed for miles through a desolate country with scarcely a house in sight. He almost hoped she had fled to Sherwood—for though Lady Orrington

would be very much disgusted at such behaviour, Anne would at least find personal security there; and in what other direction could she take refuge? Perplexed as he was about his daughter, he was almost more puzzled how to act with the Claverings. But it would not do to leave them alone—he must go back and make up his mind to say something. He felt very angry and bothered, but not touched at all, at the picture Harris had called up, of his weeping daughter stealing out of his gates to wander, he knew not whither. He thought only that he would take care she should wander little enough when once he got her back again.

The General and his son were in the drawing-room; and Mr. Clavering was cross-examining Mrs. Scawen.

“Have you seen her since dinner?”

“No, I confess I have not, Mr. Clavering.”

“Why did not you? did not I tell you to go up to her?”

“ Really Mr. Clavering, when young ladies are ill, I think they are better left alone.”

“ You are a pretty mother ! ” he exclaimed, growing red and excited ; “ but here is Mr. Scawen—well—how about Anne ? ”

Mr. Scawen’s face was enough—the General and his son drew near him together.

“ I say, you keep away ! ” exclaimed the dutiful Mr. Clavering ; “ don’t you come blundering, leave me to manage my own affairs ! ”

And stepping before his father, he seemed by his gesture, to take sole possession of Mr. Scawen’s reply.

“ I am grieved to say that my daughter is not in this house,” said Mr. Scawen, with great solemnity.

“ Not in the house ? ” gasped Mr. Clavering.

“ It is useless to conceal from you that she has left my roof,” replied Mr. Scawen. “ I had hoped, when she was missing before dinner, that she was merely in the grounds, it is too evident now, she is gone ! ”

“*You* know where she is!” cried Mr. Clavering, turning fiercely round on Mrs. Scawen, “you hate her! you would make away with her for half a farthing! you have done her a mischief, and have hid her afterwards! you are equal to it, but you won’t escape me, and so I—”

Mrs. Scawen was not used to such language—she fell upon the sofa in hysterics; and Mr. Clavering stopping short in his invective, clasped his hands over his heart, and dropped senseless into his father’s arms.

CHAPTER IX.

Rob. And displeased my father,
Whose anger, now so great, is multiplied,
I dare not venture in his house or sight.

ROWLEY.

Vio. I 'll sit me down and weep—
All things have cast me from 'em, but the earth :
The evening comes and every little flower
Droops now as well as I. FLETCHER.

THE home on which Anne had turned her back, was anything but an Eden; yet when she closed the Wilderness gate behind her, she felt as desolate as Eve when driven out of Paradise. Her mode of life had hitherto prevented the occasion for her forming any plans for herself, and she found it difficult to decide on what was best. She turned her

face southward, and walked on ; pondering on the best method of transporting herself to Datchley. There was plenty of daylight still before her : and she was in no want of money. The large allowance her father gave her was never all spent ; she had no fancy for trinkets, she was not allowed to buy books, and though she would gladly have been charitable, it was not thought proper that she should know anything of her poorer neighbours ; Mrs. Scawen's notion of that cardinal virtue being strictly confined to yearly donations of coals and blankets. She had nearly fifty guineas in her little morocco basket ; and she fancied that until Hugh returned, she might subsist upon that sum.

She recollected that a Mrs. Ford, formerly a nurse in her family, had been placed by Mr. Scawen in the farm-house attached to the estate of Datchley. She remembered Mrs. Ford, in her nursery days, a very pretty and good-natured woman ; and she thought it

would be advisable to reside with her at the Homestead till Hugh came back. Her present plan was to walk to a village about four miles off, and take there some conveyance which should bring her nearer to Datchley. She supposed she could travel all night, for she dreaded the idea of going alone to an inn. She did not quite know the way to this village,—it was a very hot day,—she was tired and dusty, and completely exhausted by all the emotions of the day. When she had gone about three miles, she sat down on a bank by the way-side, under a clump of trees, so thoroughly wearied that she could proceed no further.

It was evening; the shadows were long, and the dew was falling thickly. There were sheep-bells tinkling in the distance, and rooks wheeling homeward towards the loftiest elms. Her heart failed her altogether. She covered her face, and cried like a wearied child.

At the foot of the hill there was a black-

smith's forge. It was a rough-looking place, and she did not like to ask shelter there; but the clink of the hammers, and the glow of the fire within, gave her something like a feeling of companionship. She never forgot sitting on the brow of the hill, and watching the sparks flying through the open door.

As she sat there she heard the distant sound of a coach,—one of the northern stage-coaches going up to London. She took her resolution in a moment; stood close to the road-side, and made a sign to the coachman as he came up. It was all right, there was an inside place; they changed horses at A——, the town nearest to Datchley, and she could easily get a fly to take her forward.

The guard asked for her luggage, stared very hard when she said she had none, and opened the door;—she hurried in—the coach drove off at full speed.

She had never been in a stage-coach before. She wondered at first whether it would be

possible to breathe for many hours in such a narrow space. But her three fellow-travellers had done so—they came from Carlisle—and she was therefore led to hope she might escape suffocation.

There was a square rough farmer opposite, who spoke with such a burr that she could not understand him: a comely dame, with a large wicker basket by her side; and facing the good woman, a young man in the garb of a gentleman, who immediately began to stare Anne out of countenance.

The wicker basket had previously been standing upon the seat Anne had taken, and it was now placed on the woman's lap at the top of a large bundle done up in a checquered handkerchief, so that it almost obscured the small square window.

The good woman and the square farmer looked very hard at Anne, though not so disagreeably as the gentleman in the other corner; but she did seem a little out of place among them, and that is the truth. Her little

drawn bonnet of white silk, her high dress of lilac and white stripes, finished with a small collar of costly lace, her green cashmere shawl, her pale gloves, and the single massive bracelet, from which swayed two or three pendant ornaments, encrusted with turquoises, composed a toilet not often displayed in a stage-coach. And when she turned to the dame at her side, and asked in a very clear but subdued tone, "How long it would be before they reached A—?" her companions had no difficulty in deciding upon her station in life. There is nothing common people are more sensitive about than the voice.

"Well then, perhaps half-past eight in the morning," said the dame.

"More likely nine,—may be half-past," said the square farmer.

"You have friends at A—, Miss?" asked the dame, looking very inquisitive.

"I have a very old acquaintance not far off," said Anne.

“ Might one ask in what line ? ” asked the good woman.

“ She keeps a farm,—she once was my nurse ; I am going to pay her a visit,” replied Anne.

This was possible—the dame looked contented. A fine lady might take such a freak into her head : but the young man was only the more puzzled, for he knew that a lady would indulge her whims in a different manner, and not take a fatiguing journey by night in a stage-coach, and, above all, unattended. However, he felt it his duty to impress Anne favourably ; and to effect this object, he arranged his hair and dress a good deal, and then talked for her benefit to the farmer, about dogs and horse, and his father’s seat in Westmoreland,—his father being a retired cotton-spinner, who rented a paradise on the shores of Windermere. Of course to Anne he was an object of far less attention than her two other companions ; his class being one peculiarly removed

from her thoughts: she knew what a farmer was, or a decent housekeeper; but a plated piece of goods like this would-be gentleman, she could not make out.

In a short time the dame took some apples out of her basket, and offered them all round. And when she had done eating them, the farmer and herself drank each a little glass of a white liquid, which was concealed in a thick, green bottle. Then she ate some buns, and next some sandwiches, which she shared with the farmer; and then he produced the green bottle again, for that part of the picnic seemed to belong to him, and the glass crossed over more than once to the dame, who generously offered it to Anne each time before she drank herself. After this, they both ate some sausages, which they cut with a clasp knife upon slices of bread, and then it appeared that they had made their supper. The courteous and grateful manner in which Anne declined each delicacy in succession,

particularly the green bottle, when she found it did not contain water, which she had rather hoped, formed a complete contrast to the opposite gentleman, who exclaimed abruptly: "Thank you! no, I took a cutlet at six; confounded early dinner, but it will serve me till to-morrow;" or, "No, I'm much obliged to you. I drink nothing but champagne this weather;" speaking *to* the farmer, and looking *at* Anne: "perhaps, one of the lowest habits existing." In Staffordshire they dropped the *gent*, as the farmer very properly called him. At Warwick the farmer got out, the good dame was to go on to A——. About nine o'clock they drove into that clean old town, and Anne, having paid the coachman so liberally that he forgave her want of luggage, was accommodated with an ancient post-chaise to take her to the Homestead, about two miles out of the highway.

They stopped before an old brick wall with a curious indented coping. A heavy, wooden

door, with a rough stone step before it, stood half open; and disclosed, like a picture set in a frame, a garden, dyed a thousand colours with beds of summer flowers, and a low brick house with casement windows, seen in glimpses through the gnarled boughs of several fine apple-trees, dotted over a mossy lawn.

Anne stood irresolute a minute, after having dismissed her chaise, with one foot on the step, and one hand on the massive iron handle of the door, gazing wistfully into this peaceful retreat. Presently there came into the porch, the neatest, prettiest elderly woman, in a snow-white muslin cap and kerchief, and a black stuff gown, with a sweet, calm face, soft blue eyes, and light hair, streaked with grey. She looked round the garden once or twice, and then called in a pretty little voice,

“ Towser ! ”

Instead of a mastiff, as might have been expected, a strange looking girl emerged from a parsley bed, and came trotting up the walk

with her apron full of herbs. She had a face like a shark, yellow hair gathered into a bristly knot behind, and a thin, wiry, figure about four feet high. Nothing could be neater than her reddish print dress, and brown holland pinafore, and the tight, black worsted stockings and leather boots, rendered very visible by the shortness of her petticoats.

“I think you must have gathered enough, Towser?” said the dame.

“Not half enough, Missis,” replied the girl diving her hand into her apron, and bringing out a fragrant heap of herbs: “you take these to begin with, and I’ll soon get some more; and you mind and chop them fine enough, for Master George will lay it all to me, if the stuffing is not good.”

The quiet dame seemed to take this admonition in very good part, and received the herbs into her own snowy apron; and Towser, having got rid of her bundle, threw her brown pinafore over one shoulder, and went along

the path executing sundry steps and capers which bore some distant resemblance to the contortions of the earliest polkas, and showed off her leather boots to great advantage.

Suddenly her sharp blue eyes discerned Anne leaning in the doorway.

“Missis, here’s a lady!” she exclaimed.

Anne finding herself discovered, advanced timidly. It was difficult to her to ask protection, for what could she do if she was refused?

“Mrs. Ford?” she asked, as the dame came forward to meet her.

“That is my name, madam,” she replied, in a gracious tone.

“You don’t know me, Mrs. Ford. I am Anne Scawen. I am grown quite out of your recollection.”

“Miss Anne? What a pleasure!” exclaimed Mrs. Ford, her soft complexion glowing quite brightly between delight and surprise. “It is so many years since I have seen any of your dear family.”

“ Will you take me in, Mrs. Ford ? ” said Anne ; “ I am come to ask you to give me shelter for a long time.”

“ Will I, my dear Miss Anne ? Why this house is more yours than mine, being Master Hugh’s. But how is it ? Who brought you, my dear ? Is your papa come down to Datchley ? ”

“ Come and sit with me in the porch, Mrs. Ford,” said Anne, still holding the kind woman’s hand ; “ and I will tell you all my story.”

The porch was built of brick with loop-holes on either side above the oaken seats.

Anne and her nurse sat down together, and Towser, thinking she might gain something by their conversation, stole to the outside, and standing on the tips of her strong boots, with her eyes raised to the level of the loop-hole, and her fingers clutched firmly in the opening to sustain her in that exalted posture, Towser took her first lesson in Romance !

CHAPTER X.

Man. Till when, most welcome
'Tis spoken from the heart, and therefore needs not
Much protestation. At your better leisure
I will enquire the cause that brought you hither :
In the meantime, serve you. FLETCHER.

It did Towser's heart good, and moistened her sharp blue eyes more than once, to see the cordial sympathy with which Mrs. Ford received Anne's impassioned narrative. With the exception of her early marriage, she told her whole story to her nurse, dilating upon Mr. Clavering's deficiencies till his best friends would not have known him ; and, dwelling on the cruelty of being driven from her father's roof, because she refused to give her hand to a titled ideot.

Most warmly did Mrs. Ford assure her that everything in her house was at her service, and that she could receive no greater satisfaction than in having Anne for her guest.

“But, my dear child,” she added, “we must let Mr. Scawen know where you are. Imagine his uneasiness and regret until he hears that you are safe.”

“Oh! not yet, Mrs. Ford!” said Anne, imploringly; “I am not equal to any fresh excitement—I am so completely exhausted. If he were to come and insist on my returning with him, I should not know how to bear it. Let me have a little rest before anything is done.”

Thus urged, Mrs. Ford could only take her in her arms, and agree to put off the discussion to some future time; and then having led her into the parlour, fragrant with jessamine and mignonette, and placed her in state upon the sofa, she sallied forth to

summon Towser to prepare breakfast for her guest. Towser appearing with a very innocent countenance as if she had heard nothing of what had passed, bustled in and out of the kitchen with tea-things, and fresh bread and butter, and put on the water to boil; and whisked an egg into a little saucepan, and a slice of ham on the gridiron; and was then ready to start upstairs, carrying a huge can of spring water into the spare bed-room, and, returning like a moving hillock under heaps of lavender scented sheets which she disposed on three or four chairs to air around the fire.

Anne who had not eaten since the morning of the previous day, was not sorry to see these preparations; and Mrs. Ford with a delighted countenance, stood pressing her to do justice to the meal before her.

Towser likewise was very urgent, bringing in a "drop of cream," from the dairy, and a cold fowl from the safe, and part of a

currant tart which had been set aside for the evening meal, and which she possibly thought would assist the flavour of a strong cup of tea.

And when Anne had breakfasted, and Mrs. Ford insisted on her going to bed, and taking a few hours' complete rest, Towser suggested that if the lady did not get up to dinner at one o'clock, it might be better that she found a slice of bread and cheese on the chair, by her bed, on which she might regale at her leisure, together with a draught of strong ale.

Anne declined these luxuries, but gladly availed herself of Towser's proffered service to walk over to A——, and procure her a few needful articles of clothing; and that young person having accepted a five pound note, and tied on a coarse straw bonnet with a strip of blue calico across the crown, expressed herself ready for action.

"And I tell you what, Missis," she said,

“you put in the apple-pudding at twenty minutes *to*, and the potatoes at half-past, and the greens at a quarter *to*, and Oh ! my gracious, mind you strain ’em properly, or Master George will lay it all to me ; and lend us your flag-basket, for I shall bring home all I can, and Mills’s boy may come over with the rest in the afternoon. But, la ! I shall be home in time to see about the greens, so don’t you touch them till I come back.”

Mrs. Ford then conducted Anne to her bedroom ; which was low and spacious, with a massive old bedstead, and carved chest of walnut-drawers, and a wide casement opposite the bed ; which, standing open, admitted the soft breeze, fluttering through the broad fragrant leaves of a fine old walnut-tree, whose whitened boughs sheltered that corner of the house. For a few minutes after she had laid her head on the lavendered pillows she remained awake, gazing on the patch of

blue sky visible through the rustling leaves ; or watching Mrs. Ford as with noiseless steps she moved about, dusting and folding her delicate clothes ; and then the feverish hurry and fatigue seemed to give way to a refreshing sense of weariness, and she sank into a profound slumber.

Towser meantime was wending her steps towards A—— with a vast increase of importance in her gait, owing to the bank note which she squeezed firmly in one hand.

I must make haste, she thought, as she pressed forward in the heat, because of the greens, and because I want to be the first to tell Master George what has happened. For, notwithstanding her tender years, being not quite fourteen, Master George was the object of her idolatry. It would be absurd at her age to give the name of love to such a preference ; but always talking and thinking of him, and referring every thing to his will and pleasure, a good many grown

women know less of the feeling than Towser did. Her admiration, however, was neither perceived nor returned by Master George, a tall, showy-looking young man of two-and-twenty, with dark hair, a rich brown complexion and deep sparkling blue eyes. He managed the small farm attached to the homestead, with considerable skill and energy; and taking an honest pride in his vocation, was as careful to be every inch a farmer, as other people are to push themselves beyond the limits of their class. You would always see him dressed like a Cumberland peasant, in a broad-skirted coat, leather gaiters, and a grey felt hat. But he spoke pure English, like his mother, and was more scrupulously neat and clean than farmers usually are on working days.

Towser went nearly a mile out of her way, in the hope of meeting him; but he was not in the field where she had expected to find him, and therefore, running to make

up for lost time, she made her way along the High-street, and entered Mr. Mills's shop.

There she planted herself stoutly at the counter, ordered and demurred, and threw the things about, as if she had been twice her age; objected to the price of this, and the quality of that, and stood her ground with a determined good-nature, that did her some service among the shopmen. Having selected her purchases, and stowed the smaller articles in her flag-basket, she ordered the boy not to be a minute later than six o'clock with his parcel, and then proceeded to several other shops, where she bought exactly what she had been directed, without having any list to refresh her memory, and without making a single mistake in quantity or price, and having then quite filled her basket, turned her back on the town of A—— and trotted home, where she arrived in time to put on the greens.

But Master George did not come home to dinner, and neither greens, nor boiled beef, nor apple-pudding could make amends to her for his absence, and it was very hard work to wait till evening before she could confide her secret to a living soul. She had serious thoughts of stealing into the straw-yard, and telling Jack Ridge, the thatcher, all she knew about the strange lady. And the afternoon was usually devoted to needle-work, which like Clorinda, she hated extremely; and she had to sit in the parlour with Mrs. Ford hemming towels, and shuffling her black boots in a state of great irritation, until she was allowed to put on the kettle for tea. Then to see how she wielded the kitchen poker, lunged desperately at the bars of the grate by way of getting up the fire, and railed at the farm-servant (cook and dairy-maid in one), who had let it burn rather low, which was no wonder with the glass at seventy-five, and

pumped the kettle full to overflowing, and swung it on the trivet, and rattled about the cups and plates, without breaking any,—prove what great souls sometimes inhabit little bodies, and struck awe into the heart of the fat dairy-maid.

While she was thus engaged, Anne came down stairs, so refreshed by sleep, and a plentiful use of Towser's can of spring-water that Mrs. Ford was startled by her beauty. She thought it was no wonder the young gentleman would not give her up; but, indeed she doubted whether there was any man in the world deserving of such an exquisite creature.

Anne on her side, could not cease to admire Mrs. Ford's appearance, in her afternoon dress of black silk and close lace cap. In her nursery days she had never been struck, as she was now, with the superior air of refinement in her *ci-devant* nurse. Her language and gestures were so completely those of a higher

class—but a child naturally thinks more of a servant who will give her sugar on her bread and butter, than of one who speaks English, and eats her dinner like a lady.

While Towser bustled in and out with the tea-things, Anne seated on the sofa beside her nurse, was looking over her purchases, or leaning from the casement, enjoying the prospect of the little fertile garden walled in like a convent—the grass “freshe as velvet,” and the flowers overrunning the baskets and borders in which they were planted.

While she looked out, the garden gate was pushed open, and a young man came briskly up the walk. At the same instant the clatter of Towser's boots along the tiled passage kept time to the tune he was whistling as he entered the porch, and proved the accuracy of her ear.

“Oh! Master George, why didn't you come home to dinner?” she began in an appealing tone.

“Why didn’t I?” returned Master George, suddenly placing his grey felt hat on Towser’s yellow locks; “why, because I wanted to see them carry that field down by Welsted, which I knew would not be done if I was not looking on.”

Towser’s shining face was distended with grins beneath the felt hat.

“But I say, Master George!” she exclaimed, “Missis has got a strange lady in the parlour with her.”

This intimation nothing daunted Master George, for the farmers’ wives were called ladies by Towser, and he supposed that one of them had dropped in to take tea with his mother.

“Well, you little imp, stand out of the way and let me get in to my tea,” he replied.

Towser seemed to offer some opposition to Master George’s progress, for there was a sound of scuffling and of suppressed laughter

from the young lady, and then a hasty retreat into the kitchen, as he entered the parlour.

"My son George," said Mrs. Ford, a deep blush overspreading her sweet face.

Anne turned from the window with a gracious smile, said she was glad to see him, and moved leisurely towards the table.

"This is Miss Scawen, George," said Mrs. Ford.

He coloured crimson through his brown complexion—advanced a step or two towards Anne, and said with emotion—

"Madam, you are the only one of your family I have ever seen; you are the first whom I am able to thank for your kindness to my mother."

"I am sure, Master George, as far as I am concerned, the kindness was all on Mrs. Ford's side," said Anne; "I gave her nothing but trouble."

Towser, who had entered with the teapot

in one hand, and a plate of water-cresses in the other, stood stock-still listening to the interview with the air of a *connoisseur*, and being probably satisfied with Anne's gracious manner towards her young master, she deposited her contributions to the meal, and retired, nodding her head gravely.

When tea was over, and Master George had gone out into the farm-yard, Mrs. Ford, drawing nearer to Anne, said gently,

"I don't like to vex you, Miss Anne, but I shall not be able to sleep till I have written to let Mr. Scawen know you are here."

"Oh! why, Mrs. Ford?" asked Anne.

"It is no common obligation I owe to your parents," replied the nurse; "it is through them that I am not now a miserable and degraded wretch—and to fail in any act of respect to your father would be the basest ingratitude. I will tell you my story, Miss Anne, and then you will not blame me that I seem to prefer his will to yours."

"I could not blame you, nurse," said Anne, looking into her sweet face.

Mrs. Ford paused as if to collect herself for an effort, and then began :

"When I was about eighteen, I was apprenticed to a milliner at Windsor. I was thought beautiful at that time ; I do not mind saying so, for it was allowed by one who was supposed unerring in his judgment of such matters. I do not think I was vain. I never cared to hear people flatter and admire me ; but this person, a nobleman in a regiment then at Windsor, won my heart,—I am sure my whole affections ; and though I knew I could not be his wife, I consented to live with him ; I would have agreed to die for him as readily, for he had entire power over my whole being. We passed more than a year together,—I cannot say happily on my part, for I repented the step I had taken from the very first. Although he lived very much in the world, he

spent a great deal of his time with me; and I must say he never reproached me for my melancholy or my tears, which I believe to be a very uncommon act of forbearance. Only when my remorse grew stronger, and he began to fear that I should leave him, he resided wholly at Windsor, and set such a watch upon me, that I should have found it difficult to make my escape. Well, when my son George was born, the doctor who attended me,—a true Christian,—seeing the low state of my spirits, which prevented me from recovering, entered on the subject with me, and represented that the first act of a real penitent would be to quit the guilty life I then led. I had often thought so before, but when the prospect drew near, I felt as if I had not strength—for I loved him, and I do still, as a husband, and the kindest that could ever be. Besides, as I told the doctor, I did not know which way to turn,—a guilty creature that no one would trust or receive. And

then the good doctor told me that a lady, a patient of his, who had been spending the summer at Richmond, had heard my story, and was willing to take me as a nurse.

“I was cowardly enough, when the moment of escape was at hand, to hesitate for a while—but all was at stake—my peace here, my safety hereafter. My Lord was absent,—the nurse too had stepped into the town,—the doctor’s carriage was at the door,—I dressed myself in haste, wrapped my infant in a shawl, and rushed down stairs; before we arrived at Richmond, I fainted, and for two or three days I remember nothing. The agony of that period—I wish it might atone—at least it proved I was sincere in my remorse—and sometimes I am able to rejoice that I quitted him, not in consequence of being deserted and forgotten, but while his affection was as ardent as in the first days of our acquaintance.”

“And how did he bear your flight?” asked Anne.

“He tracked me into Lancashire, and wandered about King’s Cope in the hope of meeting me: but as I never left the house, for I was still very weak and ill, he wrote to me, and your dear mamma to whom I showed the letter, consulted with Mr. Scawen, who went out and met my lord, and told him plainly that he considered him a villain, and would shoot him with as little concern as he would a mad dog, if he found him lurking about his premises.”

“Oh, nurse, you were a true heroine? How few women would have acted as you did!”

“Nothing can palliate my conduct,” said Mrs. Ford, with a deep sigh; “but when the love lasts always, it must be true and deep, and not very coarse, to survive so many years’ absence and oblivion on his side; and I cannot hear his name now without a thrill, such as the sound of his footstep used once to send through my heart.

“I was twelve years nurse at King’s Cope, and my boy was put out in a labourer’s family at Richmond. At your dear mamma’s death, I was placed by your father’s generosity in this farm,—he was pleased to say as a just recompense for my faithful service.”

“And your son knows—”

“Everything, my dear. Concealment is not in my character. He knows, as I do, what a downward course mine must have been but for such timely help as your parents afforded me. And now, my dear Miss Anne, you will not be angry that I write to Mr. Scawen.”

“I will write myself, nurse. I have no reason to be ashamed of what I have done. He gave me no other alternative. And if he *is* uneasy at my absence, which I do not think, I shall at any rate have fulfilled my part in explaining to him the step I have taken.”

Mrs. Ford, though very capable of such a task, was not sorry to devolve it upon her

young lady ; and Anne being furnished with pens and paper, wrote as follows :—

“ I am afraid, sir, that you are too much offended with me to care to hear where I am ; but I think it right to let you know that I came straight to Mrs. Ford, my old nurse, at Datchley. I should be glad that your will was such as I could submit to without a crime,—but I can never become the wife of Mr. Clavering.”

This is not exactly the sort of letter that one likes a child to write to a parent ; but it is not very easy to get the goodness all on one side ; affection, and forbearance, and a great many other qualities, must be mutual to be had at all. One reads of daughters who are filled with love and obedience to harsh and indifferent parents ; but unfortunately one never sees them. It certainly was not the case with Anne.

Mr. Scawen thought proper to address Mrs. Ford in reply to his daughter's letter. He

said that although he had reason to be displeased with her, yet she might have done worse than to put herself under Mrs. Ford's protection. That he thought she had better remain at Datchley for the present (and he entered into some pecuniary details with Mrs. Ford); and that he should inform his friends that she was residing there for change of air. That Mr. Clavering was dangerously ill, and was at King's Cope, until he could be moved with safety; and he hoped this would be a warning to his daughter how she led people to believe again, that their attentions would be favourably received. He concluded by mentioning the time and place to which his daughter's clothes would be forwarded.

The accusation, so provoking, and so unmerited, of having encouraged Mr. Clavering's pretensions, roused all Anne's indignation. She well knew who had suggested the idea to her father; she well knew how Mrs. Scawen could accuse, and insinuate, and inflame his

anger upon slighter grounds than these. She was able to clear herself easily enough in the eyes of Mrs. Ford, and she had some thoughts of writing to her father to vindicate herself from so false a charge ; but she had lived long enough to find out that people are seldom convinced of anything they do not wish to believe, and so she thought better of it, and saved her argument.

Mrs. Ford was delighted at the idea of having her for an inmate. Anne had always been her darling at King's Cope ; and being very tender and constant in her attachments, she went back eight years without any trouble, and petted her as she had done in the nursery.

Anne was equally pleased with her new home : to remain cloistered there till Hugh came back, was the height of her ambition. The weather was fine, the country beautiful, and she was her own mistress. To sit reading and working under the trees, to ramble over the farm, to follow Mrs. Ford about the

dairy, to wander into the lanes, with Towser for her body-guard, made days and weeks pass like a dream.

One thing puzzled Mrs. Ford. Anne would never go over the grounds of Datchley. She would stand at the green gate, and gaze into the garden, and along the gravel sweep up to the house; a white building with large casement windows of the reign of Charles II., and beyond, along the tangled shrubberies into the sloping fields, dotted over with clumps of ash, and spreading beech; but she would not cross the threshold until she could do so by the side of Hugh. She would often lean against the bars, gazing into this quiet scene, where nothing stirred but the leaves of the Lombardy poplar, or the restless birds in the branches above her head, picturing to herself all the happiness and safety in store for her on that bright day when Hugh should return.

Master George, who was a great reader of

poetry, told his mother that she looked like the Peri at the gate of Paradise, as she stood lingering by the entrance to Datchley. He used to bring her flowers from the conservatories, the gardener there being his particular friend,—and she accepted these with delight. Not that he ever ventured to offer them himself;—Towser used to pursue her with a glowing face, and thrust the nosegay, and “Master George’s duty,” into her hand together. For her dazzling beauty, and the unaffected kindness of her manner, inspired Master George with the sort of feeling that Marie Antoinette often struck into the hearts of her humblest adherents.

He was perfectly devoted to her service, and in simple earnest would have thought himself overpaid for the greatest exertion, the wildest sacrifice he could imagine, by a gentle word, and a smile such as she greeted him with, when she met him after he had sent her a cluster of Datchley roses.

CHAPTER XI.

Mir. Lady, your presence illustrates
This homely roof, and as coarse entertainment ;
But where affections are both host and guest
They cannot meet unkindly.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

PERHAPS Mr. Scawen thought to inflict upon Anne a very severe mortification in compelling her to reside for some months with people in the class of the Fords. But if that were the case, the experiment was far from successful. Anne was a queen at the homestead. Her slightest wishes were made matters of serious import. She found Towser a much more devoted and amusing handmaid than the one she left behind at King's Cope. Mrs. Ford was more refined than Mrs. Scawen, or

Mrs. Legerton, or Lady Orrington, if you come to that—more gentle-voiced, more delicate, much more sensitive to the feelings of others. In many things Master George was a gentleman—perfectly simple and straightforward—very well read in English literature, for which his mother had a remarkable taste; and never vulgar in speech or gesture. In his leisure moments he cultivated flowers with great success; and was almost on intimate terms with the clergyman, an old gentleman named Lascelles, first cousin to the grandfather, who had left Hugh the estate of Datchley. These were not people with whom Anne found it difficult to associate—especially as their first thought was how to do her honour, and contribute to her pleasure and comfort. If Anne chanced to admire Master George's carnations, she had much ado to prevent him from despoiling the borders, and even gathering those intended to appear at the Horticultural Meeting at A——. He had suc-

ceeded with infinite trouble in procuring her a nest of young kingfishers; and he would have omitted an important duty rather than forget the daily supply of small fish with which Anne fed her favourites.

Mr. Scawen had intimated that Anne's allowance would be continued; and as her expenses in dress were likely to be very limited at the homestead, she indulged herself in other things. She hired a cottage piano—she bought books and music—she laid out a certain sum in clothes for the poor—*Hugh's* poor, as she used to call them. She delighted in buying real lace for Mrs. Ford's caps, and making them up for her in picturesque shapes with delicate grey ribbon—she presented her with a handsome shawl, and the richest black silk dress that could be found in the town of A——. Then she insisted on Towser wearing a costume, consisting of an old-fashioned red cloak, a quilted petticoat, a straw hat tied down at the ears, and a pair

of shoes with buckles. Master George was so delighted with this dress that Towser was never tired of running out, dancing a little on the door step to make him look up, if he was working in the garden, and then running back with a loud laugh. Mrs. Ford would then gently remind her that she ought not to be so noisy, and that she feared Towser was a bold girl ; and that young lady would stand jerking her head from side to side with an expression of great determination, and would do the same thing over again on the first opportunity. But Towser was very submissive to Anne, partly because she thought Master George would be pleased with her, and partly because she thought it a very grand thing to wait upon a real lady.

Few things afforded Master George so much gratification as to see Anne reading his books ; he had a tolerable collection of the standard poets and historians — and Anne with both time and taste for reading, made good use of

them. Those books which she bought, which were all of the same sterling description, she put on the shelves in the parlour, and desired Mrs. Ford to tell Master George to make use of them as freely as she had done of his; which message his mother gave him, but not before he had heard it through Towser; who trotted after him into the stable and informed him, as she always did, of every fragment of news that came to her hearing, lawfully or otherwise. Another extreme pleasure that he enjoyed was hearing Anne sing; Towser always told him, if he was within call, whenever Anne opened the piano; and he would go into the porch or under the window, and listen to strains that were not often heard in that retired part of the world.

Mr. Scawen had written to his connection, Dr. Lascelles, informing him that his daughter was staying at the Homestead for her health; and he, therefore, with his two daughters called upon Anne, and expressed a wish to show

her every civility. He was a well-behaved miserly old man, who fancied himself a great invalid. His eldest daughter was an elderly faded girl of forty — fond of tawdry chains and gilt ornaments, and of incredibly short petticoats, to display a thin foot and ankle. The younger, twenty years her junior, was quiet, lady-like, and sensible. The old gentleman made some sort of apology for not inviting Anne to take up her abode altogether at his house; but mentioned that his pupil, the Duke of Dalmayne, was residing with him, as a hint that he could not, therefore, with propriety introduce a young lady into his family. The eldest daughter affected an embarrassed air at the name of her father's pupil; for she would flirt with a boy of seventeen; indeed, she would try to flirt with George Ford, and she believed that he was very much attached to her in secret. Anne was rather disappointed to find that the youngest daughter was only at home for a

few days, for Mr. Lascelles sent her to stay with an aunt when he had any pupils; but he thought very naturally that the age of Erminia would secure her against any silly flirtations and attachments.

Sometimes Anne would take a walk out with Mrs. Ford after tea; and then Master George's services were sure to be put into requisition to protect them against the Irish reapers, of whom Mrs. Ford had an extreme terror.

One evening, as they were straying through the richly-wooded outskirts of the Datchley property—Master George, with a very thick stick behind, Towser hopping and running in front, and Mrs. Ford and Anne leisurely walking together—they came to a five-barred gate, on which sat a handsome boy of seventeen, in a straw hat and somewhat dishevelled costume, notching a stick with a clasp-knife.

“The Duke of Dalmayne,” said Mrs. Ford to Anne, in a low tone.

Master George stopped to feel in his pocket

for the key with which we opened the padlocks of the gates. Towser, who was in advance of the others, and who was not oppressed by timidity, stepped up, and said—

“ Now, your Grace; please, we want to open the gate for Miss Scawen.”

His Grace slipped off the gate directly, and ran towards Towser, threatening her with his clasp-knife.

Towser, in great glee, fled behind Master George, screaming and laughing.

“ A little villain! I'll cut off her head one day, Mrs. Ford. I often said I would. I owe her a grudge about my ferret. Come forward, you little wretch, and say what you did with my ferret?”

“ Please, Missis,” said Towser, appealing to Mrs. Ford.

“ Don't stand up for her, Mrs. Ford; this is the first time I have been able to catch her. Now then, out with it: what have you done with my ferret?”

"Please, sir, I drowned it!" said Towser, boldly.

"Oh! Towser, that was very cruel!" exclaimed Mrs. Ford.

"Never mind, Mrs. Ford; we will drown *her* presently," said the Duke, laying hold of Towser's red cloak.

"Oh, Master George! oh, Missis!" exclaimed Towser, struggling to free herself; "when its back was broke!"

"Who broke it?" asked the Duke.

"Oh! it was not me. There—my beautiful cloak!" said Towser, smoothing the ruffled garment. "Jack Ridge was a-feeding it, and it bit him, and he threw a great stone at it; and so I took it to the duck-pond, and put it out of its misery."

"Let me only catch you, and I'll put a paving-stone into your hood, and drop you into the canal!" said the Duke, making another grasp at her cloak.

"Oh, Master George, save me!" cried

Towser, edging herself through the gate, which he had just unlocked.

“ I told your Grace it was not a safe place ; so many farming-men about,” said Master George, holding the gate open for Anne and his mother.

“ I know, Master George ; but, you see, I could not keep it at the Rectory, because old Lascelles would have found me out. — I say, is that handsome girl your cousin ? ”

Master George eagerly disclaimed the relationship. Miss Scawen, of King's Cope, was cousin to Dr. Lascelles.

“ Ah ! she 's handsome. What is she doing here ? ”

“ Miss Scawen is staying at Datchley for her health : the property belongs to her brother.”

“ I say, Master George, why don't you introduce me ? I should like to cultivate her acquaintance.”

Master George was shocked at the idea.

"It did not become him to introduce his superiors to each other. No doubt Dr. Lascelles would do so, if his Grace wished to become acquainted with his cousin."

"I don't know that," said the Duke.

"Please, sir," said Towser, "I know a man in the village who keeps ferrets."

"Hold your tongue!" said the Duke.

"Towser, keep with me," said Mrs. Ford; "you must not speak to your betters, unless you are spoken to."

Towser jerked her head, and employed herself in polking behind Mrs. Ford for some minutes.

"I say, George, when do you mean to pull down that old stack?" asked the Duke.

"I am very busy just now, my lord," said Master George.

"Oh! but, I say, I am so precious dull: I *must* have that stack down to-morrow. We shall have such a famous rat-hunt."

"After next week, perhaps," said Master George.

"I dare say: I am to wait all next week? I tell you what — if you put me off, I'll burn the stack. I'll have some fun: and if I don't get it one way, I will another."

Master George laughed, and Towser said from behind Mrs. Ford—

"People who burn stacks are sent to Botany Bay." And, having given utterance to this wise caution, she took to her heels, and ran down the lane that led to the Homestead.

At this point the Duke was obliged to turn off to the Rectory, bidding Mrs. Ford and her son good night, and raising his hat to Anne, who returned his audacious stare of admiration with her stateliest bow.

"I suppose I must see about the stack," said Master George, laughing. "The Duke will be as good as his word."

"Why, Master George," said Anne, "you never mean to attend to what that boy says."

“ Why, madam, if I don't want to see my rick-yard burnt down, I had better,” said Master George. “ The Duke is the most mischievous young gentleman that ever the Doctor had ; and that is saying something.”

“ And as daring as he is mischievous,” said Mrs. Ford, with a sigh.

“ Well, if the worst comes, Master George, Towser has suggested your remedy,” said Anne.

“ I would not do anything to hurt him, madam ; he is a fine young gentleman,” said Master George.

“ And Towser ;—I am sure, Miss Anne, I do not know what to do with that girl,” said Mrs. Ford ; “ she is so very forward.”

“ Oh ! she will mend, Mrs. Ford : she is very kind-hearted,” said Anne. “ She was fishing with a pin in the duck-pond an hour, yesterday, in the sun, because she fancied my kingfishers were hungry, though I am sure Master George had kindly supplied them with minnows in plenty.”

And certainly Towser had her merits as well as her defects. Although she had only the start of them by a few minutes, she had managed to lay the supper neatly in the parlour: the cold meat garnished with parsley—the fresh lettuces; the plate of fruit—the delicate pastry, made by Mrs. Ford herself—the glass jug of cream,—and she was standing contemplating her work with the deepest satisfaction when they entered.

“ Oh ! missis, how lovely a cucumber would be with that lamb ! ” she exclaimed.

“ Run and get one, imp ! ” said Master George.

“ Will you come too, Miss ? ” asked Towser, taking a knife from the table ; “ and then you will see the glow-worms you was asking about last night.”

“ Towser, how dare you ! ” exclaimed Master George, whose hair stood on end at the idea of Anne going to cut a cucumber.

“ Oh, yes, I ’ll come,” said Anne, wrapping

her shawl round her ; “ what a beautiful moon to-night—how dark and rich that ivy looks over the dove-cote—where are the glow-worms—on this bank near the bee-hives ? Oh ! the dew upon the wild thyme—how sweet it is—have you found a cucumber ? ”

Towser had selected the best she could find, informing Anne that it was a vegetable esteemed by Master George ; but she stopped at the bank to gather a sprig of thyme for Anne, and to carry off a glow-worm imprisoned in a nectarine leaf. “ And if it hadn’t been for that ’ere Duke,” said she, with great emphasis ; “ you would have had a nice dish of apricots this evening, Miss, but I see him stealing round the garden this very day and picking them all. If it had not been for his nasty ferret, I ’d have come down to him and told him my mind ; but I ’ll set the dog at him if he does it again, as sure as my name ’s Towser ! ”

CHAPTER XII.

Hir. He's quick enough of foot, and counts, I swear,
The minutes cast away not spent on you.

DECKER.

THE next morning Miss Erminia called upon Anne to invite her to tea. Anne thought her manner rather sharp, but having literally no excuse to offer, she could hardly do other than accept her hospitality. "You saw the Duke last night," she said, as Anne was conducting her through the garden.

"So I understand," said Anne.

"What did you think of him?" she asked.

"He looked a very untidy boy," said Anne, carelessly.

"He is thought the handsomest creature

in the world," retorted Miss Erminia; "such a complexion! and such eyes!"

"And such a nose! It outran the brim of his hat," said Anne, who happened to be in a laughing humour.

"Oh! perhaps you are a democrat," said Miss Erminia, coldly.

"Not the least, I assure you," said Anne, laughing still more; "do you admire those dark roses? I believe I may gather one, though they belong to Master George."

"Thank you; we shall expect you at eight o'clock," said Miss Erminia, as she disappeared through the garden gate.

"From eight to ten—bearable," thought Anne; "but neither the Doctor nor his daughter are worth a moonlight walk with Mrs. Ford; and as for the little Duke—bah!"

Anne had a great pleasure that morning—a letter from Lady Lucy. She had begun to fear that her conduct had been misrepresented at Sherwood, or that Lady Orrington had

been so shocked at her resolution, as to forbid her daughter to write; but a sentence in the letter served to explain her delay. After commenting on Anne's health, which was the ostensible cause of her leaving King's Cope (and it was evident she thought Anne had been *sent* to Datchley), and expressing a sincere hope that she might benefit by passing a winter in a milder spot, she said, "I trust, my dear Anne, that what has passed will not put any coolness between us; for I feel so entirely that I could not have added to your brother's happiness, that I had no alternative but to decline his addresses." She added, "Mamma is very kind, and though she regrets my decision, thinks more of me, since I have been called upon to make it."

Anne lost no time in cordially replying to this letter: she assured Lady Lucy that Henry's character was very little calculated to make *her* happy, which was much more important than the consideration so kindly

urged by Lucy ; and that though it gave her the greatest delight to think they were sisters in affection, she should view their closer relationship with dismay ; unless—and there she broke off, for she did not dare allude more pointedly to Hugh.

She kept her engagement with Miss Lascelles, and spent, as she expected, a very dull evening. Miss Lascelles had no sense and no conversation, and she wanted the carelessly lively spirits which sometimes make an ignorant woman attractive. The Doctor was polite and learned, but he naturally handed Anne over to his daughter to be amused ; and the young Duke, at whose particular request Anne had been invited, sat shyly on one corner of the sofa, glancing out of his great eyes at the beautiful guest, and saying nothing, except in answer to Miss Erminia's frequent remarks. Anne could not help smiling at the contrast his manners presented, when talking to Towser and George Ford, to his meek replies and quiet

looks in the presence of Dr. Lascelles, but she had no idea of trying to draw him out ; and after playing some little fragments on the piano, listening to a shrill song from Miss Erminia, and looking over a book of Swiss views, she was very glad to hear that Mrs. Ford and her son were waiting to escort her home.

The next morning Towser came up to Anne in a state of great excitement.

“ Oh ! Miss,” she exclaimed, as she threw back the shutters and opened the casements ; “ there ’s such a piece of work in the rick-yard. The stack has been took down, and there ’s thousands of rats all over the place, and Master George, and that brat of a Duke, and Jack Ridge and his uncle, with the ferrets, and they are hollowing and shouting, so that you can hear them up here ; and the Duke has got a pitchfork, sticking the rats as they swarm out of the faggots—la ! it makes me creep all over to think of the nasty creatures.”

It made Anne shudder to hear of their

being so unceremoniously disposed of; but as the news in no other way interested her, she dressed leisurely and went down into the parlour, where Mrs. Ford was just beginning to make the tea. Anne took up her embroidery till she was called to the table, and was gossiping with Mrs. Ford about the Lascelles family, when Towser burst suddenly into the room, crying out,—

“Come, Missis, bustle about! here comes Master George, bringing in the Duke to breakfast! Oh! my! did you ever!—what shall I fetch? I don’t believe there’s a bit of anything hardly in the house! There’s no time to kill a fowl or anything; is there, Missus?”

“Impossible!” said Mrs. Ford, “George never would;” and she rose, taking her keys from the tea-chest, and looking round as if invoking a variety of dainties that were not likely to appear.

“Why, Mrs. Ford,” said Anne, “you have the best bread and the best butter in the

county, and eggs and honey ; and if you were to ask *me* what you ought to set before an unmannerly boy, who has been hunting rats since daybreak, I should say, a can of beer, and a great piece of bread and cheese."

Master George now appeared on the threshold, and, bowing respectfully to Anne, begged to know if he might take the liberty of bringing the Duke of Dalmayne in to breakfast.

"To be sure, Master George," said Anne ; "if Mrs. Ford likes the trouble of him. We shall want another teacup, Towser, and that is all."

Towser, however, had been running backwards and forwards like lightning, plunging into cupboards and dairy, and had found marmalades and potted meats, and a fortunate brace of trout, caught last night ; and then had dived under the matting of a currant-bush, and got a dish of beautiful white currants, with which she triumphantly passed the Duke, who was waiting Anne's verdict in the porch,

nodding her head as to an old acquaintance, and dexterously lowering the plate just as his outstretched hand threatened the safety of her carefully arranged dish.

The Duke being permitted to enter, came shyly forward with a dusty blouse, and a very scarlet face, and a head of yellow hair, tangled like a mop, from scrambling under faggots and heaps of straw; Master George, who never permitted himself to appear before Anne in dishabille, having removed all traces of the fray from his own person, followed him into the room.

But the Duke's shyness was not of the lasting kind. As soon as he had apologised to Anne for his ragged appearance, he slid into the vacant chair by her side, drew out a cambric handkerchief, like a cobweb, passed it over his face, and then set to work in thorough earnest, talking and eating in a breath.

“ Oh ! what delicious bread — and what cream you get here. You should see the

cream we get from old Lascelles; he's such a regular screw. I say, Miss Scawen, how old should you take Erminia to be? You won't guess? I think she's ninety. — Oh! yes, Mrs. Ford, this fried bacon is perfect: I like nothing better: I am so precious hungry. You eat nothing, Miss Scawen; I wish you would let me help you. To be sure, I have been up since — what o'clock was it, George, when you sent young Ridge up to the Parsonage to waken me? — Five? I thought it had been earlier; but we have been at it ever since. We have had such fun! Oh! rats by millions! And Master George has such a pet of a terrier! If you had seen him, Miss Scawen, scuttling about after the rats, you would have died of laughing. I never saw such a beauty: he was beside himself! I never shall forget Snap as long as I live."

"I am very glad I was not there," said Anne.

“ Oh ! here comes that little villain with some fried fish, I declare ! I ’m so fond of fish for breakfast. I wish I hadn’t eaten those eggs.—Never mind ; you may send me some, Master George.—Won’t you be persuaded, Miss Scawen ? ”

Towser, as she removed the Duke’s plate, in spite of sundry nods from Mrs. Ford, looked in his face, with her broadest grin, and said—

“ So you have got a yellow ferret this time, your Grace ? ”

“ Yes ; I have a yellow one, and a black one ; and, let me only find that you lay a finger on either ! ” exclaimed the Duke.

“ You had better come down and feed them yourself then, sir,” said Towser, pertly ; “ and then, if they bite you, your Grace, you, will throw stones enough at ’em yourself, your Grace.”

“ Towser ! leave the room ! ” said Mrs. Ford, trying to exalt her soft voice.

Anne tried not to laugh ; and Towser, who

looked to her for sympathy, finding she could not meet her eye, whisked round, and retired to mutter in the kitchen, where she indulged herself by talking contemptuously to the fat dairy-maid of the Duke, calling him a "brat," and a "varmint," and threatening his ferrets with every kind of bodily harm.

But the Duke, who was the greatest gossip in the parish, went on, quite unmindful of this little interruption.

"Mrs. Ford, have you heard the dreadful story of Reid's child?—drank out of the tea-kettle, and died on the spot. He was one of my Sunday-scholars; I knew him very well; I often gave him nuts in church. Did you know, Miss Scawen, I had a class at the school?"

Anne did not know it, and she was very much surprised; but she suggested that the nuts in church were not quite advisable.

"Oh! I know it's wrong—old Lascelles told me so; but I do it, and I wink at them

when they are to begin, just when old Lascelles is going to say something superfine. You see, it was so slow on Sundays; now I have a class I don't care: I hear them the catechism, and let them play at pitch and toss in the church-yard. One of the little rascals won nine shillings between services last Sunday. I always bring my loose silver to the school. And I let them fight sometimes; I think it so good for them."

Anne could not see the necessity.

"Oh! I think so; I've always been used to it. There was a fellow at Eton, Lord C——; we used to fight like anything. He was an orphan like me, but his guardians used to bully him. Now, old Orrington is easy enough to manage."

"Is Lord Orrington your guardian? I know some of the family very well."

"Do you know my Aunt Orrington? She bullies me worse than anybody. She says I am a disgrace to the peerage."

So he was, in a small way ; but Anne was rather surprised to hear him announce the fact himself.

“ I owe her a grudge, which I will pay her one day,” continued the Duke. “ She persuaded old Orrington to remove me from Eton and place me with old Lascelles, just because I got into one or two rows with the bargemen and townspeople ; and it is so dull at the Parsonage ; I am sure when winter comes on, I don’t know what will become of me.”

“ Suppose your Grace were to study,” Anne suggested.

“ Oh ! I dare say I shall study at Oxford ; I don’t want to read now. Erminia said she would teach me the piano ; I should like to learn it, only I had rather some one else taught me.”

This Scotch hint was accompanied by an appealing look to Anne, but she had risen from the table, and was examining her jars of flowers. Mrs. Ford, seated in mute

admiration, was triumphing in the thought that her young lady might be a duchess any day if she chose.

“ I say, George, let me have a look at that colt, will you ? ” exclaimed the Duke, seizing Master George by the coat as he was about to leave the room.

“ If you will promise not to mount him,” said Master George.

“ I promise ?—I mean to ride him all round Datchley wood.”

“ George, I hope you will not ; that colt has never been broken in,” urged Mrs. Ford.

“ No ; I could not run the risk,” said Master George.

“ Nonsense, George—come. I’ll take him, if you won’t give me leave, and break his knees for you.”

“ But the doctor,”—

“ D— the doctor ! ” said the Duke, driving Master George before him into the porch.

“ Ah ! that is always the way,” said Mrs.

Ford; "George never can refuse him anything. Now you will see him galloping that wild colt round the meadow, with nothing but a bit of rope in its mouth."

As the Duke did not fall a sacrifice on this occasion, but rode the colt like a second Alexander, he managed to repeat his visit to the Homestead, and to loiter away a good deal of his time about the farm. Sometimes he would fish for minnows in the pond to feed Anne's birds, and then he rarely escaped a violent quarrel with Towser, who would give him a broken fish-hook, and then banter him for his want of success, or coolly looking him in the face, would point out the exact spot where she immersed his ferret, and then darting aside to get beyond his reach, she would dodge him round the pond until Mrs. Ford called her in, to give her a lecture on her impertinence.

Then the Duke kept his ferrets at the Homestead, and a great owl, and a hawk,

and a squirrel, so that he had always an excuse to come and look after his pets; and sometimes he would help George Ford to work in the flower-beds, always grubbing in the earth and making himself very dirty; and when he threw himself on the seat in the porch, very hot and flushed, Mrs. Ford felt it her duty to step out with a plate of delicate queen cakes and a bottle of her pink currant wine, which foamed and sparkled, and tasted better than two-thirds of the champagne that is drank in England; and the "young vagabond," as Tewser privately called him, would make himself very comfortable with these provisions, lying half asleep on the bench, and lulled by Anne's exquisite music, if she chanced to be playing. Sometimes he would come down to the Homestead quite determined to offer his hand to Miss Scawen, on which occasions he discarded his blouse, and dressed with extreme care; but no sooner did he meet her loitering in the porch, or seated

under the trees on the lawn, calm, fresh, and brilliant, with her gorgeous shawl folded closely round her; and the October breeze rustling among her silken flounces, than his heart failed him, and he determined that it would be a better thing to write to "Old Orrington," and get him to open the negotiation. But when it came to writing, he found a difficulty, and put it off till he should go down to Mote at Christmas, when he could explain his wishes to his guardian in person. And then his recollection of Lord Orrington's deafness rather damped his courage, for it is unpleasant where your feelings are concerned, to have to repeat a thing three or four times, and then to have your meaning reversed or misunderstood.

It soon became no novelty to Towser to see the Duke walk in to breakfast, dinner, or supper, or, indeed, at any intervening hour of the day. He would often bring new songs, and with his little shy gentle manner (an infallible sign of an unusually daring wicked

boy), he would entreat Anne to try them over for him, saying that Erminia's voice went through his head so, that he could not bear to ask her, and as he had a pretty good ear, and a feeble knowledge of his notes, he would then play the airs himself in a horrible manner, timidly asking Miss Scawen to set him right at every bar, so that by a little hypocritical contrivance, he pretty nearly gained his end, and became the pupil of Anne, instead of the fair Erminia. He managed to keep them employed at the Homestead. One day in walking over the weir, he fell into the river, and Master George had to pull him out, and take him into the kitchen to dry, while Mrs. Ford and Towser prepared hot brandy-and-water that he might not take cold. Another time Master George, who had often warned him never to go near a fierce blood-hound which he kept chained in the yard, found him in one corner of a shed in deadly combat with this very dog, which he had loosed, and

then aggravated until it flew at his throat. He was defending himself bravely with a pitchfork ; but if Master George had not come up, the Dukedom, in all probability, would have gone to gladden the heart of his uncle ; and as it was, his clothes were so torn, that Mrs. Ford had to sew on the skirt and the sleeve of his blouse before he could return to the Parsonage. One evening he persisted in helping Jack Ridge to destroy a wasp's nest, and was brought in by Master George, deplorably stung, on which occasion Mrs. Ford attended him much more to his satisfaction than the housekeeper at the Parsonage. He was extremely anxious that Anne should not see him in this condition ; and absolutely refused to enter the house until his face had recovered its former appearance.

Another day, he must needs quarrel with the man at the lock, an ill-conditioned fellow, and a Hercules in strength ; and he was about to fight him, when Master George came

by, picked up his hat and coat, and by main force dragged him away. The young Duke was very indignant with Master George, and struggled in his grasp all the way to the Homestead, but it was of no use—Master George was in earnest.

“The fellow would kill you, and make nothing of it,” he said, “or I would not have interfered, I promise you; though I rather wonder that your Grace should like Miss Scawen to hear that you had been thrashed by the lowest blackguard in the whole county.”

Miss Scawen's name had the desired effect of soothing his feelings; he even had the grace to thank Master George for what he had done, and then went meekly into the farm-parlour, and asked Mrs. Ford to be so kind as to give him a cup of tea.

In these various ways his education proceeded. It may safely be said he never opened a book, expressing in a grown up sort of way

to the Doctor, a dislike to the style of Euripides, and the views of Tacitus, and calling in question the authenticity of one or two other classical writers which his tutor pressed upon his attention. The only thing he knew was the first page of the Church Catechism, which he taught his class on Sunday, interspersed with sundry questions about ferrets, and eager remarks upon a badger supposed to dwell in a part of the back-water somewhere below the weir, concerning which animal every boy had a different story, and which the Duke was very desirous to exterminate, with the assistance of George Ford.

Master George was extremely fond of him, and somehow felt more at ease in his society than in that of his neighbours, the farmers; and Mrs. Ford was always glad to see him at Datchley, for Anne's sake, as she told herself, but perhaps because she still, in her heart, retained a lurking partiality for the aristocracy.

CHAPTER XIII.

This love—

This wild and passionate idolatry !
What doth it in the shadow of the grave ?
Gather it back within thy lonely heart.
So must it ever end : too much we give
Unto the things that perish. MRS. HEMANS.

Ant. Dreams are toys ;
Yet for this once, yea, superstitiously,
I will be squared by this. SHAKSPEARE.

THE autumn passed away, and still Mr. Scawen showed no signs of relenting. Anne never heard from home, and it was only through Lady Lucy that she gained any knowledge of the doings in Lancashire. She learned in this way, that Mr. Clavering was regaining his health, and that his father was taking him to pass the winter at Marseilles.

Anne was glad to hear that he was safely out of the country, for she had some indistinct fears lest her father should urge the match upon her a second time, and she was weary of the strife between them.

She frequently received letters from Hugh, to whom she forwarded at intervals, a complete journal of all her proceedings. He commended her decision with regard to Mr. Clavering, in the most unqualified manner; no interested motives, no sense of obedience could justify her in acceding to such a marriage; "though," he added, "I almost regret that you could not like him, much as I feel myself the gainer by your resolution, for the connexion would have been excellent, and his rank and wealth are what you would grace and deserve. I know not if I shall ever be able to find you as good a match, for that I conclude will be the end of our Datchley scheme, if my little Anne has grown up as beautiful as she promised to be."

Anne indignantly refuted the idea of ever seeking to leave a home which she had yearned after ever since she was ten years' old. She described it as she saw it from the gate, a picture seen from one single point of view, and mentioned how she had abstained from ever crossing the threshold until they could do so together.

"I look forward as eagerly as yourself to our keeping house together at the old place," Hugh wrote in reply. "I like amazingly all you tell me of the look of it. You shall keep the casement windows by all means; as for the chairs, they will be only too splendid to use, and we must keep them papered up, a lasting memorial of your notable fingers. The grounds will want little but a sunk fence between the garden and the fields, if I rightly follow your description."

With reference to Towser, whom Anne had expressed a desire to keep in her service, he said :

“You should have *ten* Towsers if they could add to your comfort. You have had but a rough life for some years, and I hope and think it is about to end, and that we shall make each other very happy at Datchley. Don’t go and fall in love with the little Duke of Dalmayne just as I am coming home. I have no mind to give you up for the next few years. We shall certainly not be later than February. In March or April, we shall be settled at Datchley, if it please God, if it is good for us; though sometimes I tremble for the future, when I see your heart so earnestly set upon it, and reflect that I have never had another wish since I was a boy at King’s Cope; but as far as I see, unless I take the yellow fever, there is nothing to prevent it.”

The thought of yellow fever always made Anne sick at heart, but the season was healthy; Hugh had been remarkably well since he had been on the West India station; and, there-

fore, she tried to dismiss the subject from her mind. Hugh was now again in a ship with Captain Lascelles, his relation, with whom he was on very friendly terms. He was often able to make excursions on shore, and was spending his time he said, as pleasantly as he could expect, away from home, and from his family.

Anne saw by the tenor of his letters that his character was serious, and his sense of responsibility very earnest. She sometimes trembled a little at the idea of the disclosure she had to make to him, but her trust in his affection gave her courage.

He will be shocked, she thought, and so am I, when I reflect on my presumption. At that age, I had no right to judge for myself, to select a stranger unknown to my father, and fancy I could decide unerringly upon his character; but I have been bitterly punished for my arrogance. To make an *unworthy* choice! I have no business ever to

feel proud again. Hugh will think I have failed in my duty, but he will protect me against the consequences of my own fault; and he will never, I am sure, surrender me living into the hands of that man.

Hugh seemed distressed at the idea that Anne was on bad terms with her father, and, in some measure, in disgrace. He often alluded to the subject.

“I must have you and my father on cordial terms,” he said, in one of his letters. “I don’t despair of it, when I get back. He has a great deal of warmth and kindness at his heart. I am sure his letters to me would prove it to you, if you could see them: but that woman has always stood between you. When I return, I shall try to set you face to face. And talking of faces, I am sitting for my miniature according to your often repeated request. I shall send it in my next letter, for it is no bigger than a crown piece, though it will precede my own return but by a few weeks.”

And now the fine open weather that had lengthened the sunny laughing autumn far into December, began to disappear;—gloomy days, blustering winds, early frosts, heralded the approach of Christmas. No more loitering in the garden, no more strolling through the woods. A brisk walk over to A——, or along the London road, was now the limit of Anne's excursions, and her time within doors was completely occupied by her books and drawings, her work and music, and a course of instruction to which she subjected Towser during the long evenings. She felt so completely at peace, so thoroughly removed from the daily chafing of her step-mother's temper, that her health, her beauty, her intelligence improved. She sang more richly, she played with more brilliancy, she read with more profit, and her dazzling complexion and splendid figure made her an object of attention wherever she moved.

The Duke of Dalmayne came "sneaking"

in, to use Towser's expression, very constantly of an evening; for Dr. Lascelles being perfectly convinced that he would learn nothing, did not much concern himself as to the manner in which his pupil disposed of his time. So that he was not reported to frequent the public house, and that he came in to family prayers at half-past ten, the Doctor was content.

And the spacious farm-parlour, with its blazing wood fire, Anne embroidering on one side of the hearth, with Towser crouching on a footstool with her slate on her knees, close to her young mistress, and Mrs. Ford opposite, working always on some fresh crisp muslin, while Master George amused himself by carving in oak, an art in which he excelled, was a far more attractive scene to the Duke, than the silent handsome drawing-room at the Parsonage, with Erminia teasing him by her assiduities, and the Doctor pressing all the standard classic authors upon him in turn.

At the farm, there was Anne's exquisite singing to listen to, and Master George to gossip with, and Towser to worry, and an air of welcome and cheerfulness, and an excellent supper, and, above all, no Greek books in sight.

One evening very near Christmas-day, the baying of the blood-hound, the Duke's old enemy, gave notice as usual of his approach; Towser looking up from a sum in compound division, had just time to exclaim, "Here he is again, Missis, gormandizing;—I suppose you will have them woodcocks for supper;" when he entered with a scroll of music in his hand, saluted Mrs. Ford and her son, who rose to receive him, rapped Towser on the head with his scroll, and made his way to Anne's corner of the fire-place, where she sat, not as usual, brilliant and animated, but leaning back pensively in her low chair, with a letter in her lap and a medallion in her hand, on which she was gazing in an ecstasy

of happiness far more nearly allied to tears than mirth. She had not seen the Duke enter, and as he advanced shyly to her, hoping that Miss Scawen was quite well this evening, she raised her dazzling eyes to return his greeting with a startled flash of surprise at finding him so near, and dropped her minature reluctantly upon her letter.

“I am so glad your Grace has come in,” said Mrs. Ford, “for Miss Scawen is quite low this evening.”

“Low, nurse!” exclaimed Anne raising her picture with great energy; “I have not been so happy for years. I have just,” she said, turning to the Duke, who stood uneasily glancing out of the corner of his eye at the portrait, “I have just received a letter from my brother at sea, fixing his return at the first week in February. He has sent me his likeness too; he’s so altered—I have not seen him for nearly seven years.”

“ Oh ! a brother,” said the Duke sliding into the chair next to Anne ; “ will you allow me, Miss Scawen ?—Yes, a very nice miniature, I think it’s a very handsome face, don’t you, Mrs. Ford ? ”

Here Towser raising her eyes just over the frame of her slate, fixed them audaciously on the Duke, and uttered the word, Woodcocks !

“ Woodcocks, with all my heart,” said the Duke, who seemed quite aware that Towser was giving him the bill of fare. “ Miss Scawen, *will* you sing me the ‘ Cujus Animam ? ’ ”

Anne good-naturedly took his scroll, handed her miniature to Mrs. Ford, and went to the piano.

“ It is a beautiful face,” said Mrs. Ford, holding it to her son, “ and I should have known it any where for Master Hugh.”

“ Didn’t I show it you, Master George ? ” said Anne, with that courtesy which she

always observed to her inferiors; "but I believe I have done nothing but sit and watch it ever since I opened the packet."

"I certainly do wish," said Mrs. Ford to her son, while Anne was singing and the Duke leaning enraptured against the piano, "that his Grace was a year or two older."

"Oh! mother, he is a fine young gentleman—I don't think it signifies," said Master George, "and he is worth waiting for!"

"He loves the ground she walks upon," remarked Mrs. Ford.

"Of course," said Master George.

"I think you would not find a handsomer couple," said Mrs. Ford. "The Duke so fair, and Miss Anne so dark."

"I don't call her dark," said Master George.

"Only her hair," said Mrs. Ford, gazing at Anne. "I think there never was such a beautiful creature in this world!"

A sound of giggling behind Mrs. Ford's chair.

"Towser!" said George Ford.

"Yes, Master George."

"You have been listening!"

"I know, Master George."

"How dared you?"

"Seventeen and nine, Master George, how much?" asked Towser, tapping her pencil on the rim of her slate.

"What were you laughing at, Towser?" said Mrs. Ford.

"Twelve and three? fifteen,—and seven—fifteen and seven, Master George?" said Towser.

"Did you hear my mother ask you why you laughed?" said Master George, sternly.

"Yes, Master George; because Miss Scawen does not care for that 'ere Duke, no more — no more than I do, there! Twelves in a hundred and fifteen? how many times? Oh! dear, this sum does bother me."

"I set off for Mote to-morrow, Miss

Seawen," said the Duke, "I wish to Heaven I had not engaged myself to Old Orrington, I must go now, I suppose. I had rather spend my Christmas at the Parsonage."

"But you will hunt, shall you not?" said Anne.

"Yes, if this weather continues, but hunting in Suffolk you know—I hate Suffolk—though Graybroke, my place, is in Suffolk—I wish—that—I—could—" Here he paused, and turned very red.

Anne who thought him a boy, as he was, did not suppose for an instant that he was hovering on the borders of a declaration.

"When you go to Oxford," she said, laying aside the 'Cujus Animam' "you could take lessons on the piano. I hardly suppose you could find a good master in this neighbourhood."

"Who was your master, Miss Seawen?" inquired the Duke.

"Moscheles, the last I had. I rather

wished to have taken some lessons of Madame Dulcken, before I left town," returned Anne.

"Lucy learned of Madame Dulcken," said the Duke. "I wish Miss Scawen you would employ me; is there nothing I could take from you to my cousin Lucy?"

"Thank you very much—nothing. I have not finished that toilet cushion; and I wrote to Lucy yesterday."

"You will send your love to her?"

"Oh! to be sure. Lucy will take that for granted."

"And I shall tell her about your picture. I was quite frightened when—I—first—saw—"

The Duke coloured scarlet again, and came to a stand.

"Supper is ready," said Anne. "Oh! Towser, that sum wrong again! How careless you are. See now—you have not added in the remainder. It is right now."

The Duke recovered his complexion while Anne looked over Towser's slate.

“ I shall not be long at Mote, Miss Scawen,” he said, when they were seated at table. “ I shall find you here, when I return ? ”

“ Oh ! yes, I am a fixture at Datchley,” said Anne ; “ when I move it will be only across the road.”

“ I shall like so much to become acquainted with your brother,” said the Duke.

Anne said it would give her pleasure to introduce them ; and Mrs. Ford looked at her son triumphantly.

It was time to separate, the Duke shook hands with Mrs. Ford and Master George, and then going bashfully up to Anne, ventured to take leave of her in the same manner.

Anne shook hands with him very cordially, hoped that he would enjoy his holidays, and went up to her room.

She placed her beloved miniature on the table by her bedside, gazed at the calm, pale face, and solemn dark eyes, the last thing

before she put out her candle and fell asleep.

Very early the next morning, Mrs. Ford was wakened by a terrible cry; a shriek like a person in mortal agony. It came from Anne's room. She threw on her dressing gown, and rushed across the passage. As she entered, she saw by the light of the lamp, a white figure, staggering towards her with outstretched arms. It was Anne, panting for breath, and trembling so violently that Mrs Ford could scarcely hold her.

"What is the matter, my dear Miss Anne; what has frightened you?" she exclaimed.

"Nurse, I shall die—I shall die—" said Anne, her teeth chattering. "I saw him—I—nurse; I've been dreaming—don't leave me."

"Yes, my dear, you have been dreaming," said Mrs. Ford, leading Anne back to the bed. "I will stay with you, try and sleep again."

Mrs. Ford drew together the embers of the fire; heaped on some fresh wood, and as the flame blazed and crackled, and threw a cheerful light over the long room, she returned to the bed-side, and putting her arm round Anne, who was sitting up, passing her hands over her eyes, and still breathing hurriedly, she drew her head upon her shoulder.

“Nurse,” said Anne, holding her fast by the hand, “I dreamed, and so distinctly, it was hardly a dream: there was a sea-shore with high cliffs, and palm-trees, and deep calm blue water; and then the wind swept down the hills, and the sea was lashed up among the rocks, all in a foam; it was all surge and black peaks and breakers, and a lowering sky. And it seemed as if there were men clinging to one of the rocks, half hidden by the spray, it was all confused, but there were spars whirling round in the midst of the water—and there—among them

all, there rose to the surface one head—that head, nurse—as calm as it is now before me—and cast one look up to Heaven,—one steady look—and then sank, and the waves closed over it—and there was nothing but foam, and the trees bending under the wind, And, I suppose, then, I uttered a cry, nurse. for it seemed as if my life went out altogether.”

“ My dear Miss Anne, it was no wonder,” said Mrs. Ford ; “ you had been for hours sitting looking at that picture, and it is but his head, you know ; and what with always thinking of Master Hugh, and the description he gave you in his last letter of the harbour, and the sudden gusts of wind, you made it all up together, in your sleep, into that horrid dream.”

“ I suppose so, nurse. Dreams mean nothing, do they ?—have you any faith in them ? What day is this ? the twenty-first. Did you ever find a dream come true, nurse ? ”

“Never, my dear,—except — there is one dream that I must say, bodes some misfortune, to dream of an infant.”

“Oh! then I’m safe, nurse,—Hugh is safe. I’ll go to sleep again. Don’t let me keep you here.”

But Mrs. Ford remained beside her till daylight; rejoiced to see her sink into a tranquil sleep; and when she woke refreshed, with the sun shining upon her frosty window, she was able to smile at the terrors of the night. Her spirits now rose daily; for every day brought nearer the period of Hugh’s return.

She had written him one long letter on the receipt of his picture, pouring out all her passionate feelings as she could do, to him alone in the world.

It was evident that she was not much concerned at the Duke of Dalmayne’s absence; as Towser one day remarked to Mrs. Ford, while she was ordering her about in the

kitchen ; for that young lady, in the absence of Master George, usually reversed their positions, and dictated to her mistress the order of the banquet.

“ I suppose next time it will be found out that I know best,” said Towser, parading the kitchen in a very high pair of pattens, for she had been washing celery at the pump ; “ a brat like him, indeed ! Miss Anne has something else to think about. He gave me a guinea, though, and told me to keep my hands off his ferrets while he was away. I ’ll choke his old owl, though, if he keeps making such a noise in the night. I gave him a mouse yesterday, out of the trap I set in the dairy, and pleased him a bit ; but I won’t stand that moaning he makes—it ’s unlucky.”

“ But Towser, about that guinea,” said Mrs. Ford.

“ Yes, missis.”

“ I think if you were to send it to your grandmother—”

“ Well, and I *have* sent it to my grandmother ; the old soul wants it more than I do ; for Miss Anne gives me pretty well all my clothes. I say, missis, if you put all them carrots into the soup, I would not be *you* ; for Master George can’t abide ’em.”

“ I don’t think there are too many, Towser,” said Mrs. Ford, meekly.

“ Oh ! don’t you ? let’s have a look ;— why perhaps if you scrape them a little more then they may do ; for you *are* a good cook, Missis, and that’s the truth.”

Mrs. Ford accepted the compliment, and went on paring the carrots.

“ Miss Anne had a letter this morning,” continued Towser ; “ it was from Lady Lucy ; there was something about the Duke in it, for I see her smiling. That pincushion with the gold on the green velvet, she’s a doing for Lady Lucy. She’s the Duke’s cousin. He has two sisters, but never a brother, for I asked him. I must find out somehow what

that was about the Duke in the letter. I dare say I shall catch her leaving it about somewhere, for her head's full of Master Hugh."

"Towser!" exclaimed Mrs. Ford, "*never!* remember, never look into a letter; it is treacherous—it is shocking,—and if George were to hear of it, he would not allow me to keep you in the house one minute."

Towser started in amaze, for Mrs. Ford hardly ever spoke so forcibly; but the name of Master George made its wonted impression. Instead of dancing or grimacing, she wiped her eyes with the back of her hand, and said in a penitent tone, that she would not do it again.

Anne expected to hear once more from her brother before she saw him, to announce his arrival at Plymouth. January was now drawing to a close, and every day her hopes rose, and her anxiety increased. The post came in after breakfast; and as the window looked

out into the little walled garden, she used to wrap up, and go down to the gate, to catch the first glimpse of the postman.

“ I really believe, all the time, it is too early,” said she to Mrs. Ford; “ but if the voyage were very short, I might hear before February,—or I may get a letter from Jamaica, just before he sails. It is worth trying for.”

And then a fall of snow came; and Mrs. Ford would not hear of Anne standing out at the gate.

“ What will Master Hugh think if he finds you laid up with a cold,” she urged; and as Master George strode down the lane, knee-deep in snow, every morning, to meet the postman for her, she had no excuse for running the risk.

He came back empty-handed two days, but on the third day she saw, as he entered the garden, that he had a letter. She darted into the porch, seized it eagerly, and drew

back quite disappointed to find that it was not from Hugh. There was some printing at the top, she did not see what, a circular of some kind she supposed, and going leisurely back into the parlour, she opened it as she stood before the fire.

“Nothing, nurse,” she replied to Mrs. Ford’s look of inquiry; and began to read the printing inside. There was an enclosure which she held as she read; that for the reasons thereon assigned, the letter enclosed was not delivered to the person to whom it was addressed. What was it! Her own last letter to Hugh, and across the direction the word DEAD coarsely stamped in large red letters.

She raised her hands imploringly to Heaven, and then fell, a senseless heap, as if struck down by lightning, upon the floor.

It is uncomfortable, but public offices cannot be expected to study people’s feelings; it is enough that they thrust the corpse, as it

were, under their eyes, and leave them to make the best of it.

Anne's best was not very well, for Mrs. Ford sinking down by her side, and raising up her head on her knee, saw with inexpressible terror that blood was slowly flowing from her mouth.

She had broken a bloodvessel. Towser, hearing Mrs. Ford's piteous cry for help, came running from the kitchen.

"Call George, quick—tell George to come!" exclaimed Mrs. Ford, who in every dilemma looked to her son's assistance with the most perfect confidence.

But Master George was half way on the road to A—— by that time: gone to market.

Towser gave one quick glance round, then snatching up her hat, she said,—

"Keep up your heart, Missis, you had better not move her; I'll go to A—— for the doctor, and send Martha to you mean-

time, with a basin of warm water, only don't give way, because I can't be in two places at once."

And Towser, boldly plunging into the snow, struggled to within half a mile of A——, when she fortunately met Mrs. Ford's doctor, and returned with him in his gig. The proper restoratives were administered: Anne placed in bed, the room darkened, the house hushed. A message was despatched to the Parsonage, which produced two very polite inquiries daily while Anne lay between life and death, and one ditto, when she was pronounced to be improving a little. Dr. Lascelles likewise undertook, at Mrs. Ford's request, to write to Mr. Scawen, and let him know of his daughter's sudden illness.

It was all true. Hugh had been on shore with Captain Lascelles, and the captain's boat was sent to bring them back to the ship. The boat got among the breakers and went to pieces in sight of land. Some of the sailors

remained clinging to a rock, and Hugh with Captain Lascelles, notwithstanding the roughness of the sea, ventured out on a raft in the hope of saving them. The raft struck on the rock; the life-boat from the harbour soon came up to them, but Hugh had sunk; most of the sailors were drowned, and Captain Lascelles brought to shore without any signs of life. He recovered, however, and wrote a letter full of plain but touching expressions of feeling to Mr. Scawen, on the death of his son.

The little Duke returned to Datchley that very day. He stole down to the Homestead in the evening, that he might hear the latest news of Anne. It was all so silent, for even the blood-hound had been sent to a farm at the other side of the village, that he hardly dared to knock at the door.

It was opened by Towser, who holding a candle high in air, shook her head at him, and refused to let him set his foot in the house.

“Come, you go away, your Grace, there’s a good boy,” said she, “for we must not have no noise. Miss Scawen is as ill as ever she can be; and the place is to be kept as quiet as if we was all mice. Master George can’t see you, nor Missis neither, and if you knock your head ever so hard,” she muttered, observing the Duke strike his hand on his forehead as he turned away, “I don’t suppose you will knock any sense into it, any how!”

CHAPTER XIV.

Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers that fading been :
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

ESSEX.

They found that life did yet in her remaine,
Then all their helps they busily applyde,
To call the soule backe to her home againe.

SPENSER.

THERE are some circumstances in life, concerning which, the mere name suggests no definite impression. A person is said to have lost a relative,—you pity them, you consider it an affliction; but what notion can you form of the degree of their bereavement? Which of the numberless gradations from distress to agony has it been their lot to endure?

The Lascelles at the Parsonarge, remarked

that it was a melancholy thing for a young man of so much promise to be cut off just as he was entering into life; the Doctor adding, that it was the decree of an all-wise Providence; which everybody, even the Duke, knew before: but what living person could look into the recesses of Anne's mind and read there, that the sad event, which they deplored as the sorrow which a few weeks could obliterate, was wringing her heartstrings to the verge of what reason and life could sustain, with an agony, compared to which all the tortures of the middle ages were a sport and a dream. It is terrible to consider, to recall, to depict such suffering; the struggle is one that no words can paint, and happily, there are not many persons capable of feeling in that exquisite degree.

Mrs. Ford's extreme tenderness of manner was a luxury to Anne; her silent watchfulness and sympathy, gave her all the consolation she was capable of receiving. Had she been

at King's Cope, exposed to the tender mercies of Mrs. Scawen, she must have died.

It was many days before she was allowed to speak ; many more before she could be raised into a sitting posture in the bed ; and all this while, no reply had been received from Mr. Scawen. It seemed incredible to the Fords, that so terrible a visitation should not have softened his resentment towards his daughter ; for George Ford, thanks to Towser, knew as much of Anne's history as she had related to his mother.

Her recovery was so very slow, that several times the medical man urged Mrs. Ford to have farther advice, and as often she wrote to King's Cope, entreating to know what she ought to do, for she did not know whom to summon, and she had unbounded confidence in her own Dr. Rudyard.

It was no wonder that Anne's progress was retarded ; in addition to her overwhelming affliction, the thought constantly forced itself on her mind, that she had now no one to

protect her, in case Mr. Hardwicke should ever return to claim her; and, though she sometimes hoped that a man of his character might rather desire to avoid being shackled with a wife, yet the uncertainty was dreadful, and in her deplorably weakened state, the thought haunted her like a spectre.

One day she was lying weak and helpless, pondering with an aching heart on her wretched prospects, Mrs. Ford sitting working by her bed, when Towser's sharp face was inserted through the half opened door, with an admonitory sign to her mistress. Anne, supposing that some question was pending about soup or jelly, languidly assented to her nurse's departure, and remained pursuing her own dejected reflections. In a few minutes, Mrs. Ford returned, followed closely by a gentleman, and coming softly to the foot of the bed, said, "Your father, Miss Scawen," and vanished gently from the room; while Anne, almost fainting, was clasped in her father's arms.

He was altered beyond what she could have imagined ; his dark hair had turned quite grey, and he looked twenty years older. He had risen from a sick bed to come to Datchley, and nothing but his severe illness had prevented his writing or sending before. Above all, there was something in his manner so softened, so gentle, and caressing, that she was penetrated to the soul, and throwing her arms round his neck, she gave way to a passionate burst of tears, in which there was as much remorse as affection.

“ My child, we must bear it together,” said Mr. Scawen, in a faltering voice.

“ Oh ! papa, don't let Mrs. Scawen come to me ! ” said Anne, as soon as she could speak.

“ No, my dear ; she is at King's Cope,” said Mr. Scawen, soothingly : “ you and I are the only two who mourn his loss. We are better alone for the present.”

“ Oh ! papa, for a long time,” said Anne, her head still resting on his shoulder.

“ Yes, my love ; we will go abroad, when you are able. We must support each other. We must think more of him, and less of ourselves. But now we will not touch upon it, this agitation is unfit for you : try to sleep, my dear ! ”

“ Shall you stay with me, papa ? ”

“ Yes, my dear child.”

“ Papa, I have been very wicked,” said Anne, suddenly raising herself from her pillows.

“ My child, let the past be forgotten ; let us begin anew, we have both been mistaken, I as much as you.”

“ Not *that*, papa ; something you do not know ; something I must tell you,” said Anne, holding back the curtain which Mr. Scawen was trying to arrange ; “ though I am afraid you will never forgive me, yet I cannot rest until I have told you all.”

“ My dear, there is nothing I will not forgive you ; but you must lie down and compose

yourself. Some other time I will hear what you have to confess," he said, with a half smile, as if he thought it could be nothing very terrible.

And Anne, fatigued in body and mind, was fain to obey his directions; and fell asleep, holding her father's hand.

Mrs. Ford gladly accommodated Mr. Scawen at the Homestead, and he spent the greater part of the day in his daughter's room. She gained strength gradually, though steadily, and in another week was able to come down for a few hours into the parlour.

This was an eventful day at the farm. Towser darted into the kitchen with the news to Master George, that Miss Anne was a-coming down stairs to tea, with Missis and her pa, and that to be sure she did look like a ghost if ever there was one.

"And if I was you, Master George," she added, "I'd just go in and pull down that 'ere picture of the ship in a storm, that hangs

over your book-shelves, for you know it might put her in mind of her troubles."

Master George acted on this kind-hearted suggestion, and removed the engraving just in time; Towser standing zealously on tiptoe, and brandishing a candlestick against the wall, by way of throwing a light on the subject.

"I am a-going to make your tea for you, Master George," she said, bustling about the kitchen; "Missis is engaged with the gentle-folks. Come, Martha, where is the tea-pot? rinse out them cups, there's a good girl, and don't be all night filling the milk-jug. Perhaps, Master George," she added, with her quick, sharp glance, "I may give you a drop of cream, to-night."

Master George, who did not concern himself very much about what he ate and drank, was sitting by the fireside, deeply engrossed with Arnold's "Lectures on History."

"Now, Martha, get on with the dry toast; that bit is not brown enough, you must do

it again,—Miss Anne likes her toast crisp—and don't fall asleep over it;—here, let me rake out the lowest bar. Don't you know you ought to have a clear fire when you are making toast?"

Considering that Martha was twenty-five, and Towser fourteen, it was curious to see how the little animal domineered over her fellow-servant. But not content with dictating to Martha, she must needs try her hand on Master George.

"Now, Master George, be a little brisk, do; you have been reading this hour,—tell us a bit of news. Here me and Martha are as dull as—"

"As dull as a great thaw, eh! Towser?" said Master George, drawing to the table.

"Ah!" said Towser, with a very deep sigh.

"You know all about it, don't you, Towser?" said Master George.

"I should think so, if any one did," said Towser. "'There's nothing so dull in a house as sickness. I am sure to hear Miss Scawen

moan, moan, as she did for days and days, Master George, it was enough to drive one straight to Bedlam ! And you were just as bad, yourself ;—oh, yes, you were,—don't tell me ; what with you and Missis, it was a mercy I kept my senses. You want some more sugar ?—you are a sugar-rat, as Miss Anne calls *me* sometimes."

"I believe, Towser, that you did feel for Miss Scawen," said Master George, with energy.

"Feel for her !" said Towser, stretching the tea-pot towards the kettle,—“now, Martha, don't you go and drownd the tea,—I believe I did ; and if you were to see her in her mourning, Master George,—crape all over—and her waist no bigger than that cup—she is so fallen away.”

Master George made no remark ; he sat looking mournfully into the fire.

"I must say I look very well in mourning myself," said Towser, glancing down

at her black dress; “but — oh, my good gracious, Master George, who is it knocking at the back-door at this time of night? Yes, it is,—I know his step;—that young rogue; — and whereever is he to go? He can’t be took into the parlour before Miss Anne?”

Here Towser opened the kitchen door, and ushered in the Duke of Dalmayne, saying, coolly,—

“I thought you was a tramp, sir, coming round that way,—so I was in two minds whether I should let you in. Ah! I see you’ve been in the duck-pond; that’s the worst of having it so near the gate; however, that don’t so much matter, as you can’t go into the parlour.”

“I have not been in the duck-pond,” retorted the Duke; “and who talked of going into the parlour, you little fool? Stand out of the way, and let me get to the fire; it is very cold to-night, Master George,—I want

to hear about Miss Scawen. Don't let me disturb any one," he added, seating himself on the corner of the table, and observing that the dairy-maid, who had risen on his entrance, remained standing on one leg.

Upon this hint Martha began to clear away the tea-things; the Duke refusing Master George's offers of refreshment, but capturing the cream-jug as it passed him on the tray, and compelling Towser to hold him the sugar-bason, from which he abstracted lump after lump, dipped them in the cream, and crunched them deliberately,—Towser uttering a prolonged, oh! at each repetition of the offence.

"I say, George, is this true that Mr. Scawen is come down here?" asked the Duke.

"Yes, my lord."

"And what are his plans? What does he mean to do with Miss Scawen?"

"They go to Italy as soon as Miss Scawen is able to bear the journey."

"Italy!" said the Duke, with a prolonged whistle.

"Italy," echoed Towser, giving him a saucy stare.

"There, take your confounded sugar away," said the Duke, pushing the basin from him.

"Not much left to take," said Towser, gazing down into the vacancy caused by the Duke's fingers.

"I say, George, do you think I could have an interview with Mr. Scawen?" asked the Duke, after sitting silent for some minutes.

"To be sure you could," returned Towser, not giving Master George time to answer; "there's the dairy, the only room that's disengaged; only your Grace,—if your Grace will be so good as not to sit down in the cream."

The Duke sprang from the table, and pursued Towser, who fled from him under the dresser, where, crouching among the copper

stew-pans, she thrust forth her sharp face, and nodded to him familiarly.

"If my mother was here, Towser, she would send you to bed at once," said Master George.

"Ah! but she's *not* here, Master George; and there's his Grace could not spare me, he has got something particular to say to me presently."

"I'll put you on the fire, if you bother me!" said the Duke, returning to his seat. "Well, George, do you think I can see Mr. Scawen?"

"I will inquire, if your Grace wishes it," said Master George; "but I think not. Mr. Scawen has declined seeing Dr. Lascelles. I don't think he is equal to receiving any one."

"Well, then,—I—How long do you suppose they will remain abroad?"

Master George could not at all guess, but Towser, with great alacrity, said, "Shall I ask 'em?"

“Why you audacious little vixen,” said the Duke, “you don’t mean to say you would dare to do that?”

“Don’t I,” said Towser, coming up to the Duke; “What do you bet I won’t go into the parlour, and ask them, this very minute?”

“Bet!” exclaimed the Duke, plunging his hand into his pocket,—then, seeing the absurdity of betting with Towser, he turned away, laughing, and said to Master George,—

“What a rascal it is,—she will come to the gallows yet.”

“Come, Martha, you sweep up the hearth; don’t you mind the Duke!” said Towser, with a patronizing air: then folding her arms demurely, she walked quietly out of the room.

“She will not do it, George?” said the Duke, anxiously.

“Oh, no, my lord,” said Master George; “she cannot.”

“She’s the most daring little devil on the face of the earth,” said the Duke.

"That she is," said Master George.

"I should like to have her for a tiger," said the Duke, musing; "she is just the size."

"She's more like a boy than a girl," said Master George.

"More like a shark than either," returned the Duke.

Having made this complimentary remark he sat silent, swinging his foot, and gazing at the bars of the grate. Master George took up his book, and there was nothing heard but the clinking of Martha's pattens, as she moved about the wash-house, which adjoined the kitchen.

After an absence of about half an hour, Towser came flying back into the kitchen, whirling round and round like a leaf driven by the wind, and uttering a succession of shrill screams, indicative of intense satisfaction.

"I'm going, Master George, I'm going! I'm going!" cried Towser, alternately spinning and bounding in the air; "who'd have

thought it? Your Grace, don't you wish you was me?"

"What do you mean?" asked the Duke, angrily.

"I'm going to Italy along with Miss Scawen! Martha, do you hear? come and listen to the news. I'm going to foreign parts, across the sea, and we shall be away a whole year. I don't know where to put myself, that I don't!"

"I know where I'll put you, if you make that confounded noise!" said the Duke, seizing Towser as she was hopping across the kitchen. "Come here, and tell me if you dared to bring my name before Miss Scawen in the matter."

"*Your* name sir? Lor, I should think not, we had something else to talk about," said Towser, with much contempt; "I'll tell *you*, Master George, how it came to be settled—but I should think his Grace had better go home; the Doctor won't like him

to be out of bed so late, going on for nine o'clock."

"Look here, Towser, I'll send for my mother, if you behave in this manner," said Master George.

"Oh! mercy, Master George, do forgive us this once," said Towser, making a horrible grimace.

"And get on with your story!" said the Duke, who had established himself again on the corner of the table.

"Why you see, Master George," said Towser, turning her back on the Duke, and facing George Ford, with her arms wrapped up in her pinafore; "I went in and said I thought the bell rang, and there was Miss Anne sitting in her low chair by the fire, laying back, and looking very white, and her pa sitting by her side and holding her hand, and Missis a sitting on the sofa marking your handkerchiefs; and Missis said the bell did not ring, and I was a turning round, when Miss Anne

said, ‘ Oh ! Towser, we were speaking of you, I want to know if you would object to going abroad with us ! ’ Oh didn’t I catch at it, Master George ! and Mr. Scawen said that his daughter was used to me, and liked me better than an older person to wait on her, and that if my parents approved of my going, he would engage me. And as I have no parents, only a grandmother who will be uncommon glad that I have got such a place, it was settled directly. I shall talk French like anything before I come back ; and as for my dancing—” Towser here began to execute a very rapid *pas seul* before the fire, which made the Duke laugh heartily, and even Master George could not keep his countenance.

“ And you will be gone a year,” said the Duke.

“ A whole year,” said Towser ; “ we go as straight as ever we can go, to Genoa ; and then to—to other places, we haven’t made up our minds exactly where, but I’ll let you

know, Master George. I shall write to Missis—I'll write to you if you like it."

"Do," said Master George.

"Well, there's nothing for it then but to wait," said the Duke, rising slowly; "good night, Master George; what are you grinning at, you little villain."

Towser, throwing open the door for his Grace's exit, replied by her very lowest courtesy, and a gesture of the extremest derision as soon as ever his back was turned; after which her excited feelings led her to execute another fandango, in the midst of which Mrs. Ford entered, and commanded her to go to bed.

Anne and her father were still seated together at the parlour fireside; and Mr. Scawen observing her extreme paleness and feebleness of manner, urged her to go to bed. Anne, who had been for the last half hour on the verge of her awful confession, but had constantly paused with the words half spoken,

her lips trembling, and her heart failing her altogether, now took a sudden resolution.

“Before I go, papa,” she said, “I must tell you what is on my mind, the only secret I now have from you, and which I cannot rest until you know ; for I feel that I receive your kindness on dishonest terms, until you see me as I am.”

“Well, my dear, what is it ?” said her father, leaning kindly on the arm of her chair.

“Papa, when I refused to marry Mr. Clavering,” said Anne, trembling, “I had a reason which I dared not own to you then, I was married already.”

Mr. Scawen looked at his daughter with a sort of pitying kindness, as if he thought her sorrows had unsettled her memory ; but having begun, she went through the whole story, even to where she found, from Lucy’s account, that her lover was unworthy, and ended by imploring him to pardon her fault, and to help

her in her need, should Mr. Hardwicke ever return to England.

Mr. Scawen listened with the deepest feeling and attention; far from being angry, the way in which he viewed the matter, made him still more disposed to regard her with affection. Since she was married already, it was no wonder she did not comply with his wishes; it was no feeling of self-will, but an absolute impossibility that prevented her from accepting Mr. Clavering. He therefore embraced her affectionately, assuring her that he would take every care that she should never fall into the hands of Mr. Hardwicke.

“Your first object in such a case,” he said, “must always be to avoid publicity: therefore, if he never returns to this country, which is likely enough, you will not have to come forward in any way; but if he should do so, and should refuse to be bought off, which you had better try, for I imagine he must be a needy man, you must throw the affair into your law-

yer's hands at once. A marriage such as yours can be set aside; not without a most painful degree of publicity, such as I hope may yet be avoided; but it can be broken, and let that be your immediate care, should he ever insist in claiming you. I give you these directions, in case I should not be living at the time. We have both had a warning lately that life is uncertain."

Anne felt a freedom, and a peace of mind after this confession that she had not known before, since her unlucky marriage.

Her father's kindness was redoubled if possible, for he seemed to think that she had an additional claim upon his protection.

It was settled that Mrs. Scawen should remain at King's Cope, while Anne and her father were in Italy; for she did not like travelling, and she suggested that it would be as well to keep a home open for Henry, whenever he might be disposed to avail himself of it.

Directly Henry received the news of his brother's death, he wrote to his father to learn whether he could not have Datchley; and hearing that it devolved upon Anne, he consulted a lawyer to find out if it would be possible to dispute this arrangement. He could not see how he would be the better for Hugh's death, unless he came into his property; and he had learned to view every occurrence, whether public or private, solely as to whether it could conduce in any way to his own benefit.

The father and daughter went to church together the Sunday before they left Datchley. The little Duke could not refrain from lingering at the door, and handing Anne into the carriage. As he did not speak, and looked extremely sorry, it was rather pleasing to her than otherwise, to see him in this manner, before she went away. It was many years before she saw him again.

“Who is that handsome boy?” asked Mr. Scawen.

“The Duke of Dalmayne,” said Anne.

“Ah! a cousin of the Orringtons. I suppose you have met him at the Lascelles.”

“Yes, and he was very often at the Homestead,” said Anne.

“What did you think of him?” asked Mr. Scawen.

“I thought him a pleasant, idle boy,” said Anne.

“And a great admirer of yours,” said Mr. Scawen.

“I believe so,” said Anne; “boys take those fancies sometimes, it appears.”

Anne spoke so artlessly, that her father could not suppose that she built any ambitious hopes on the Duke’s admiration; nevertheless he thought proper to give her the following advice:

“Remember, Anne, that should any peculiar circumstances render it important to your

happiness, that you should be free, that unfortunate connexion *can* be broken."

"I foresee no such contingency," said Anne; "all I can dare to hope, is that I may live always single, and retired."

It was a sad day to all parties, when they left Datchley; poor Mrs. Ford was dissolved in tears, and Anne hung weeping round her neck, until the last moment; and Master George, who stood at the door, plunged in the deepest melancholy, was very much inclined to fall on his knees, as Anne, in passing out, extended her hand to him like a queen.

Towser, who had kept up bravely, till the instant of parting, and who had, five minutes before, been pelting the Duke's owl, to the great edification of Jack Ridge, now burst into a vehement and sustained roar, which lasted long after Master George had hoisted her into the seat behind the carriage, in company with Mr. Scawen's servant, a phleg-

matic sort of person, who looked at her with some curiosity when she first began her vocal exhibition; and then stared vacantly forward, without attempting to offer her any consolation.

"I think now, Towser," said Anne, when they were seated on the deck of the steamer, which was to convey them to Rotterdam. "I think we must begin to call you by your real name, Jane Lawrence, 'Towser,' was very well at the farm."

"No, thank you, Miss," said Towser, steadily; "it was Master George gave me that name, he did — because I had a way when I first came to the Homestead of barking, to amuse myself."

"Barking, Towser?" said Anne.

"Yes, Miss, I could bark beautiful—just like a little dog; and as Master George called me Towser, I had rather keep the name, just to put me in mind of the Homestead."

Anne did not oppose the wishes of her

sùivante in this particular, and Mademoiselle Tozère sounded very respectable at the hotels where they put up.

The Scavens went first to Genoa, where they passed the remainder of the winter, they then proceeded to Florence for the summer, and thence to Milan and the other places of note in the north of Italy.

Mr. Scawen was highly cultivated, Anne intelligent, and anxious for improvement. She could not have visited the treasures of art and antiquity with which that country abounds, with a better cicerone than her father; and he experienced the greatest delight in showing her whatever was worthy of observation.

She wrote constantly to Lady Lucy, and received from her in return, frequent and affectionate letters. She also wrote now and then, to Mrs. Ford, giving her tidings of her health, which mended very slowly; but Towser was a most indefatigable correspondent to the Homestead. She wrote perpe-

tually to Master George, describing the different wonders that she saw, always in a very off-hand and disparaging manner, for she was no admirer of anything foreign, but clearly, and with a great deal of good sense. Anne received one letter from Mr. Clavering when she was at Milan. It seemed that he had returned with his father to London, and that he had very much recovered his health. It had the merit of brevity at any rate.

“I say, Old D—. has had another stroke; so now, come, what do you say? Will you make it up?”

“W. CLAVERING.”

“I am afraid this will not be very tempting, my dear,” said Mr. Scawen, smiling, as Anne handed her father the letter: “after the Duke of Dalmayne, ‘Old D—’s. title’ will hardly be an inducement.”

“No, indeed!” said Anne: “but if you are writing to the General, I should be glad

that you would tell Mr. Clavering I am very willing to 'make it up,' in the ordinary sense of the word. I like him very well, now I am out of his way."

The Scawens went for one year, and they stayed five. They travelled into Switzerland and the Tyrol; they went all over Italy, wintering at Rome, and going north or south for a summer excursion, as their fancy dictated. A perfect understanding and friendship had grown up between the father and daughter; as their great sorrow had been borne together, so all their pleasures were now shared. Time softened the agony of the blow to both by equal degrees; they sustained one another, they accepted in the same spirit, the affliction that God had sent, and they sought together the alleviations which He has promised and bestowed on those who mourn. Every now and then there was some talk of Mrs. Scawen coming over to join them; but their return was so uncertain, that this was *only* talked of.

She had not the least inclination to come, for it may safely be said that she had no affection for any body in the world, and she was as thoroughly comfortable at King's Cope, as any one can be, with a bitter temper and a bad heart.

She wrote, however, regularly every six weeks to Mr. Scawen, giving him an account of his affairs and those of her neighbours, and expressing a respectable degree of interest in Mr. Scawen's health and enjoyment.

Anne was still very delicate ; her complexion never recovered its healthy hues, but she was, if possible, more beautiful and more admired than ever. Little as they went into society they could not pass several successive winters at Rome without becoming known to a good many people, both English and foreign ; and Anne had several opportunities of giving a successor to Mr. Clavering. But none of them excited even a passing interest in

her mind. She was thoroughly indifferent to general admiration, and conscientiously desirous never to bestow on any one else any of those feelings which from his own conduct she was unable to entertain for Mr. Hardwicke. She perfected herself in languages, in music, and in singing; she learned something of sculpture, and studied history with an ardour she had never known before, on a spot where every foot of ground has been trod by heroes whose names once filled the world.

When she came of age she was installed into the possession of Datchley, and very soon had to exercise one of the privileges of proprietorship.

Dr. Lascelles, who had always fancied himself ill when nothing was the matter, became ill in real earnest and died. The living was in Anne's gift. She laughed first when her father told her so, and then became agitated, for she was very artless and unpresuming,

and the notion of having such a responsibility on her hands frightened her.

She recollected that Mrs. Morton's youngest son was brought up for the Church; he was then old enough to take a living; what she had heard of him made her believe that her choice could not fall on a fitter person. Her father approved of her selection, and she wrote at once to Mrs. Morton with that affection which had never diminished since she left Parkindale, offering the living of Datchley (a very valuable one) to her son James.

It was accepted with gratitude by the son, and no less so by the mother. Mrs. Morton wrote to her "little Anne" with all the warmth of her affectionate nature to thank her for bestowing the living on "her good James." But Anne little knew how acceptable the gift was to both mother and son. The eldest brother's extravagance had nearly ruined them. James had given up all but

the merest pittance of his own fortune to save his brother from disgrace, trusting to his own industry to support himself; and Mrs. Morton had let Parkindale, and was living in Edinburgh on less than she had been used to spend with her milliner. James would now have a home to offer his mother almost as comfortable as that to which she had been accustomed, while he could devote his zeal and talents in the way he most desired—in the cause of religion.

But a new trial awaited Anne. Her father, whose health had been much shaken, caught a fever at Rome and died after a short illness. It was an inexpressible comfort to her that she had been for so long a time on such affectionate terms with him, and that her society had been to him a source of constant enjoyment and consolation. His name was perpetually associated in her mind with that of her beloved brother, and the thought which gave most peace and tran-

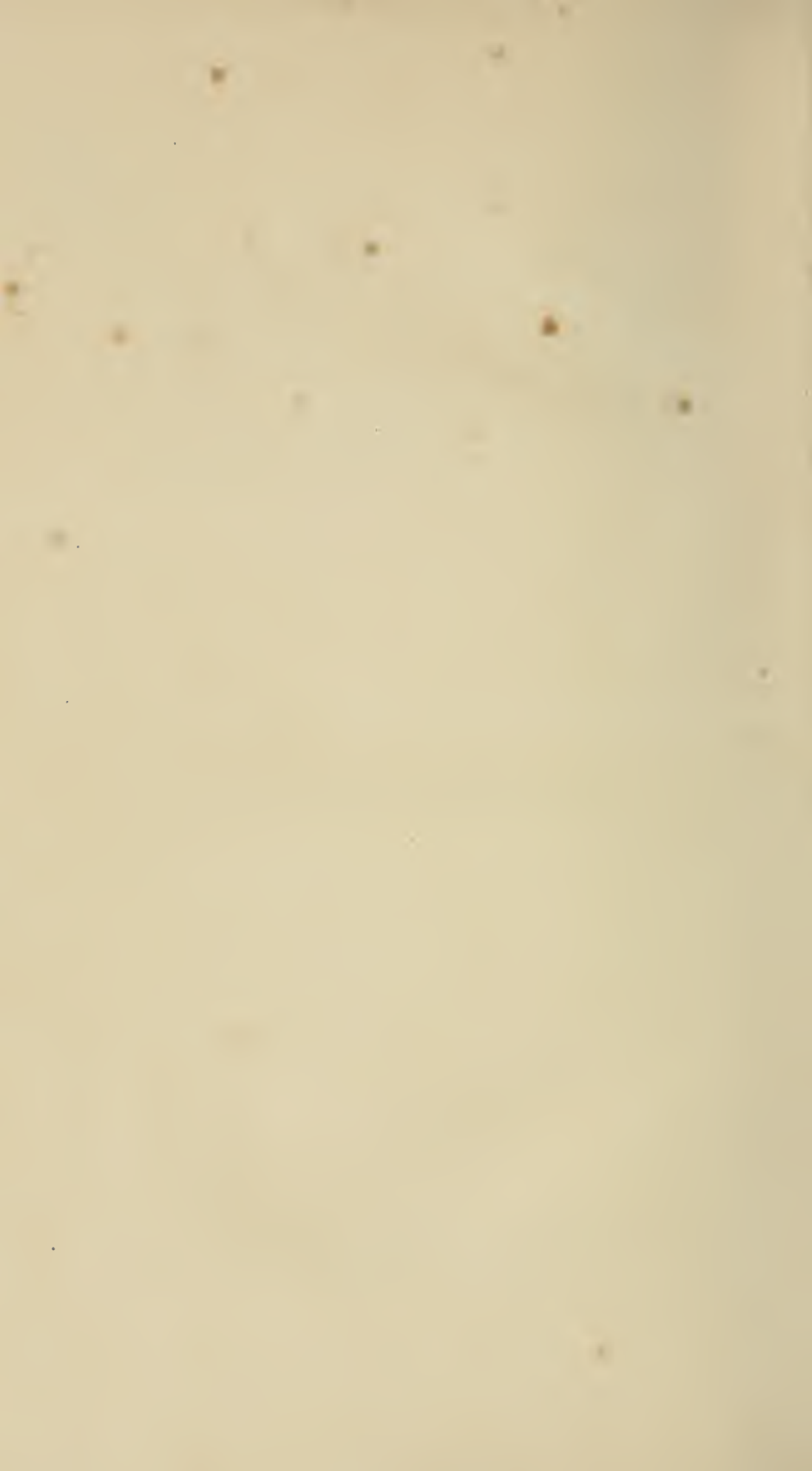
quillity to her heart was one of the last he had suggested himself, that the memory of Hugh had done what perhaps his presence would never have effected, and set the father and daughter "face to face."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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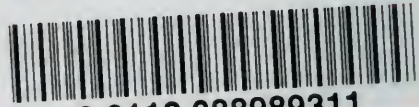




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